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HEBREW PROPHETS

FOR ENGLISH READERS

IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE REVISED VERSION OF
THE ENGLISH BIBLE, PRINTED IN THEIR POETICAL
FORM, WITH HEADINGS AND BRIEF ANNOTATION

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IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOL. I.—AMOS, HOSEA, ISAIAH (I-39), AND MICAH

τὸ λαλήσαν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν

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PREFACE

THIS edition of the Prophets is intended for the reader rather than the student. There are many intelligent, but not necessarily highly-educated people, who take a real if somewhat desultory interest in prophetic literature, but feel that they have not time to study it thoroughly, and are not infrequently repelled by the solid character of the Bible commentary. This book is not a commentary. There are already many such works, excellent of their kind. Should this book lead to their use and promote a more complete study of the Bible we shall be only too thankful.

But we assume that those whom we have in view would wish to read the prophetic literature more intelligently and to feel its power more effectively than they find possible by use of either the R.V. or A.V. in its present form¹, and need some further guidance to the prophets' meaning. We have therefore:

1. Arranged the text in lines, stanzas, paragraphs, &c., in such a way as to bring out and emphasise its literary and poetical form;

2. Introduced rather frequent headings to guide the reader as to the general drift of the subject, and in some

¹ 'It is as if,' says Prof. Moulton, 'the whole were printed "solid", like a newspaper without the newspaper headings. The most familiar English literature treated in this fashion would lose a great part of its literary interest; the writings of the Hebrews suffer still more through our unfamiliarity with many of the literary forms in which they are cast. Even this statement does not fully represent the injury done to the literature of the Bible by the traditional shape in which it is presented to us. . . . This solidified matter of Hebrew literature has been divided up into single sentences or "verses" numbered mechanically one, two, three, &c., and thus the original literary form has still further been obscured. It is not surprising that to most readers the Bible has become, not a literature, but simply a storehouse of pious "texts."—*The Modern Readers' Bible. Select Masterpieces*, p. 6.

measure to overcome the difficulty of those abrupt transitions which are so perplexing to the uninitiated reader;

3. Added a brief introductory sketch of the life and work of each prophet and a few short notes where they seemed necessary to make the meaning intelligible.

Under this last head considerable self-restraint has been exercised, and we have endeavoured to avoid, as far as possible, lengthy discussions of any sort. While it was practically impossible to omit 'critical questions' altogether, we have only dealt with them so far as they have subserved the main purpose we had in view. The origin and status of the prophets' office and the nature and character of their work are treated in the General Introduction. Each volume will have Chronological and Lectionary Tables, and a Glossary of words the meaning of which has been modified or changed.

In order to avoid unnecessary repetitions we have placed an obelus (†) outside those marginal readings which we believe to be distinctly preferable to the text.

It may be felt by some that such an edition tends to lay too much stress on the literary at the expense of the religious and spiritual character of the prophetic writings. Our answer to such an objection is that the *present* religious value of the prophets is only fully realised by those who clearly understand, in all its bearing, the character of the message which they were called upon to deliver to the men of their own time and country. It is, moreover, no depreciation of a jewel to draw attention to the beauty of the casket in which it is placed.

And here may we put in a plea for the teaching of the Prophets in our public schools? We do not mean to suggest that this literature would form a suitable subject for examinations. We have no wish to see Isaiah "explained with reference to the context". But we

should like to see our children taught, as many children in the schools of Germany¹ are now being taught, to feel something of the charm and beauty of what is unquestionably part of the best literature which we possess. Nor will the moral and spiritual teaching of the old Hebrew prophets ever be out of date². The profundity and purity of their conceptions of the Divine character and attributes; their exalted witness to the possibility of a communion between God and man; their stern insistence upon righteousness, national and personal, and solemn warnings of judgement upon sin; their heroic preaching of moral and social obligations and buoyant confidence in the final triumph of a kingdom of righteousness and peace; their splendid enforcement of the lessons of faith and hope, of mercy and loving-kindness, make their writings an ever-ready and effective instrument in the training of character and the cultivation of the highest ideals.

We desire to take this opportunity of acknowledging our great debt to numerous writers on the Prophets whom we have either specially consulted with reference to this edition, or whose works have helped us in the past in our study of prophetic literature. Several of these are referred to or quoted in the text. To mention them all would be too long and difficult a task. Among the more helpful have been the classical com-

¹ Mr. T. C. Horsfall, who has given an interesting account of Dr. Rein's system of religious instruction, which is adopted in many schools in Germany, makes a statement shewing the interest which children take in the subject. 'In one school,' he says, 'in which Professor Cornill's little book on the Prophets was used by the teacher, the children were much disappointed when they heard that there would be no time for more prophets, and begged that they might have at least one more.'—Rein's *System of Religious Instruction for Schools*, p. 17.

² Their writings, together with the Psalms, unquestionably form the principal and most valuable part of the literature of the Old Testament. And, as one has well said, 'our increased acquaintance with the religious literature of the ancient world has emphasised the supremacy of the Old Testament Scriptures. They still stand in lonely eminence, as they have always stood, immeasurably superior to all else of their kind.'—Illingworth: *Personality, Human and Divine*, p. 173.

mentaries of Dr. Pusey, Prof. Delitzsch, Dr. Cheyne and Prof. George Adam Smith, the Cambridge *Bible for Schools*, and the *Century Bible*. To these we should certainly add Dr. Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, and his *Jeremiah*, and *Life and Times of Isaiah*; Prof. Robertson Smith's *Prophets of Israel*; Dr. Farrar's *Minor Prophets*; and many articles in Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*, and the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. We have to thank the Rev. D. C. Simpson, Hebrew and Theological Lecturer at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, for valuable suggestions in some points of detail, and the Delegates of the Oxford University Press for their kind permission to use the Revised Version.

F. H. W.

F. E. P.

SEWERBY VICARAGE, BRIDLINGTON,

August, 1908.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I. THE ORIGIN AND STATUS OF THE HEBREW PROPHETS.

FROM a religious point of view the prophets were the most important element in the Hebrew community. They were the accredited teachers of the people, whose work and privilege it was to declare the word of God. But whence they originated and how they reached that unique position are questions which cannot be answered with certainty. In almost the earliest books of the Old Testament we find them existing as though a matter of course. And yet we can distinguish a marked difference between the prophets of one age and those of another. They are part of that great spiritual evolution by which God reveals Himself 'by divers portions and in divers manners' (Heb. i. 1).

The earliest evidence of a definite kind is to be found in the first book of Samuel. The investigation would be easier if we could take this book as an altogether trustworthy historical guide, and regard Samuel as at once the founder and a type of the prophetic office. But a very cursory examination makes it evident that, to a degree not altogether determinable, the character and official position of that prophet have been coloured by the ideas of a later age. If we turn to ch. ix, which certainly belongs to the earliest literary stratum of that book, we find Samuel mentioned as a local 'Seer¹', a term which, even at the time when this was written, required explanation. He is unknown, even by name, to Saul, and certainly is not exercising any general jurisdiction over the nation. He is mentioned by Saul's servant as a suitable person to consult about their way, and one who might be sufficiently rewarded for his advice by a small silver coin. And yet in the same connexion he acts as specially inspired by God to select the new king, and secretly anoints Saul and gives him directions.

¹ There are two words so translated. That which is here used and described as archaic, being the participle of the ordinary verb 'to see'; the other, the participle of a verb which with its cognates is not unfrequently used both of physical and of spiritual vision, and came to be a common synonym of 'prophet.'

The question seems further complicated by the fact that Samuel is also the priest, or at any rate the person whose function it is to bless the sacrifice, at a feast to which he has himself invited the guests. It seems indeed implied that the feast was arranged specially in view of an unknown guest and the political crisis. And yet it is probably just in this priesthood of Samuel that we may discover the origin of the prophetic office. The prophets of later time may have grown out of the earlier priesthood. In this connexion it may be observed that the earliest code of laws (The Book of the Covenant, Exod. xxi-xxiii) appears to assign to the priests the decision of certain cases which might seem more naturally to have belonged to the prophets¹. Again, more serious cases were of course decided by the priest with the Urim and Thummim. If this view is correct, the earliest seers were probably merely specially gifted priests. Moreover, these supposed priest-prophets of Israel have their analogue in the priest-prophets of the Phœnician Baal, with whom they are contrasted in 1 Kings xviii. It is also significant that in 2 Kings iv. 42 a man is described as bringing the prophet Elisha the firstfruits of bread and corn, which were in later times, by legal enactment, as they had probably already been by custom, part of the dues of the priests. It was also, in the opinion of her husband, quite natural that the Shunammite woman should go to Elisha on a new-moon or a Sabbath (2 Kings iv. 23). It is again a significant fact that two of the three places to which the different companies of prophets of Elisha's time belonged, viz. Gilgal and Beth-el, were places noted as local sanctuaries (cp. 1 Kings ii. 1-3 with Amos iv. 4; vii. 10; Hos. xii. 11, &c).

According to the books of Samuel and Kings there was practically a succession of prophets from Samuel onwards. Even when we have made the fullest allowance for the fact that these books were largely compiled under prophetic influence, it is clear that the prophets came to have a very remarkable share of political power. The inspired prophet in time takes the place of the priest with Urim and Thummim as the communicator of the Divine will (2 Samuel vii; xii. 1; 1 Kings

¹ Exod. xxi. 6; xxii. 8, 9. The word used is God, but the expression 'come before God' implies that the decision was made at the local sanctuary and therefore by the priest.

i. 22; xiv. i-17). He became permanently attached to the king's court (2 Sam. xxiv. 11), and sometimes even accompanied the army (2 Kings iii. 11).

The prophets seem generally to have been treated with reverent regard, and, even when their teaching was distinctly hostile, with considerable toleration. This is fully borne out by what we know of the later prophets' personal history. We can hardly help being surprised by the very mild rebuke of Amos by the king's chaplain (Amos vii. 12, 13), and that Jeremiah could say so much with impunity, even in Jehoiakim's reign. This cannot be explained except on the supposition that by ancient custom a prophet was a privileged being whose person was held sacred, and who might generally say what he felt without fear of molestation¹.

II. THE SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS.

But further questions arise with reference to the communities or companies of the prophets, the so-called 'school of the prophets' which are mentioned in the time of Samuel in connexion with Saul's appointment, and again in that of Elijah and Elisha (1 Samuel x. 5, 6, 10-13; 2 Kings ii; vi. 1-7). It is very uncertain whether we should really identify those of 1 Samuel and 2 Kings. The first are described simply as a band of prophets. They are on their way to a local shrine; they are engaged in 'prophesying' with the accompaniment of musical instruments; and so potent is their influence that Saul also 'prophesies'. This word is evidently not used in its later sense, but refers to some early rude form of religious devotional exercise². The Chronicler, who is fond of archaic phrases, uses the word of singing to music (1 Chron. xxv. 1-3). Here again we can trace a connexion between prophecy and the altar. The 'sons of the prophets', which emerge in the

¹ J. S. Mill, in his *Representative Government*, p. 17, called attention to that 'inestimably precious unorganised institution—the Order (if it may be so termed) of the Prophets,' who were 'a power in the nation, often more than a match for kings and priests, and kept up, in that little corner of the earth, the antagonism of influences which is the only real security for continued progress. . . . The remark of a distinguished Hebrew, M. Salvador, that the prophets were, in Church and State, the equivalent of the modern liberty of the press, gives a just but not an adequate conception of the part fulfilled in national and universal history by this great element of Jewish life.'

² Those who have seen and heard the modern dervishes may easily form an idea of what this 'prophesying' was very probably like.

time of Elijah and Elisha, are described as living together in communities. The phrase would imply that they had become an organised and probably hereditary guild, though this latter is not a necessary inference. It is an interesting fact that the later version of Saul's ecstasy in 1 Sam. xix. 18-24 presupposes a settled community of this kind in Naioth of Ramah. This may be regarded as confirmatory evidence of the statements in Kings.

III. THE MORAL LIMITATIONS OF EARLY PROPHECY.

But of far greater importance than the history of the office and the status of the prophets, whether as individuals or in community, is the history of prophecy itself. And of this, in its initial stages, it must be confessed that we can hardly even guess. We may plausibly conjecture from the evidence of 1 Sam. ix, x, that it began with the expression of strong religious emotion, very probably in song, and we know what it had become by the time of the early literary prophets, Amos and Hosea; but between the two we have what is almost a blank. ✓ Yet we do at least know, from the examples of Nathan and Elijah, that the Divine voice which they uttered was not given to further the selfish interests of the king or nation, but was designed for great moral and religious ends. It is also true that in these hints of the history of prophecy we find certain limitations. Even in Nathan's parable the point is not the impurity of David's sin, but its gross injustice. And it is just this strong sense of justice which is the prevailing note of the Book of the Covenant (Exod. xxi-xxiii), and is so strongly marked throughout the prophetic books. Again, Micaiah, in his beautifully described vision, can still attribute to Jehovah a form of deception which would, from a Christian standpoint, be condemned as dishonest in a man (1 Kings xxii. 19-23). The actions of Elijah and Elisha, splendid religious heroes though they were, were stained by deeds of violence and bloodshed (1 Kings xviii. 40; 2 Kings ix. 7; x. 30). It is also noticeable that we find a distinction, which becomes very marked in the times of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, between the true and the false prophets, by which is meant not heathen prophets as distinct from those of Jehovah, but those prophets who followed their own wishes instead of listening to the

Divine voice, especially such as curried favour by an unjustifiable optimism, crying 'Peace, peace, when there was no peace', and 'Jehovah hath said' when Jehovah had not spoken (Jer. vi. 14; viii. 11; Ezek. xiii. 6, 7, 10). It is this distinction (more easily recognised by us with our keener moral perceptions than it could have been at the time) which confirms our belief that prophecy was no delusion, and that the Divine education of Israel was a reality.

IV. THE LITERARY PROPHETS.

(i) *Their Relation to the earlier Prophets.*

The rise of the literary prophets marks a new era in prophetic history. In them at any rate we reach a new stage in our knowledge of prophecy. We begin to understand something of that spiritual force which must have been at work long before. The character of prophecy did not essentially change when the prophets began to record their prophecies. They were still extempore preachers, but the written word had both a wider scope and a more permanent influence. Kings and princes, who might have ignored the preaching, could not afford to neglect the inspired documents (Jer. xxxvi; cf. 2 Kings xxii). It also made a lasting impression on following ages. To this we may add that in a nation's early days of writing an almost superstitious importance was attached to what was written, much in the same way as in the present day uneducated people attach quite an exaggerated value to what they see in print.

At first the prophecies were usually the substance of extempore addresses reproduced, more or less, in literary form. We see this clearly in the case of Amos. In their present form the prophecies shew an artistic arrangement, hardly possible in extempore addresses, yet in the midst of one of these (ch. vii) is introduced an incident which occurred during its original delivery (ver. 10-17). Jeremiah, again, was commanded to write in a roll prophecies which he had already uttered (xxxvi. 2). In one case we have two different representations of the same prophecy (cf. Jer. vii. 2-16 with xxvi. 2-7). There are, however, some prophecies which have the appearance of having been published first in their written form. This is very probably the case with the opening chapter

of Isaiah (where the audience would appear to be an imaginary one, as in S. James' Epistle), and almost certainly is so with the account of the prophet's call in ch. vi. The whole of the Deutero-Isaiah, or at any rate ch. xl-lv is a well-ordered literary composition, the work of a poet rather than a preacher.

(ii) *The Classification of the Prophetic Books.*

All attempts to divide the prophets into groups, chronological or otherwise, are necessarily more or less unsatisfactory, and yet some sort of rough division may be helpful.

On the whole, the best plan seems to be to mark off certain historical episodes, which had in event or prospect an important bearing on the writings of different prophets, and arrange accordingly. Thus we get:—

1. The destruction of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria. This was foretold by Amos and Hosea.

2. The threatened overthrow of Judah also by Assyria, ending in the collapse of Sennacherib's army. With this we connect Isaiah and Micah.

3. The rise of the Chaldean supremacy under Nabopolassar, ending in the captivity of Judah and the final taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar. This event coloured the whole of Jeremiah's prophecies, and the period coincides very nearly with his literary activity. To the same epoch belong Nahum, who predicted the Assyrian overthrow; Zephaniah, who proclaimed the great judgement upon Judah¹; Habakkuk who predicted the Chaldean overthrow; and Obadiah, who denounced the cruelty of Edom in the siege of Jerusalem.

4. The return from the Exile and rebuilding of the temple. The first event inspired the message of comfort by the Deutero-Isaiah (xl-lxvi). The second was due largely to the exhortations of Haggai and Zechariah (i-viii)²; while during the Exile Ezekiel had prepared the people for the renewal of religious service.

5. The reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. With these we may very probably connect the work of Malachi.

6. The oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes and the work of

¹ The inrush of the Scythian hordes from the north upon the then civilised world is thought to be that to which reference is made in Zephaniah.

² Zech. ix-xiv originated probably about the eighth century B.C., but was accommodated by an unknown writer to a later situation (probably in the fourth century) in which the Greeks were prominent.

Judas Maccabæus and his brothers. These produced the book of Daniel.

In this synopsis Ezekiel's place may be regarded as somewhat artificial. In fact, he marks a transition of religious thought. While in many points he has affinities to Jeremiah, his extreme love of symbolism, if not his direct connexion with the Code of Holiness (Lev. xvii-xxvi), prepared the way for the new religious order of post-exilic times.

It will be noticed also that no place has been found for either Jonah or Joel. The reason is that, while both books are probably post-exilic, and Jonah possibly very late, neither had reference to any known historical event:

(iii) *The Decline and Disappearance of the Prophetic Power.*

Just as in an earlier stage of its history we find the prophetic office gradually taking the place of the priestly as the medium of Divine communication and revelation, so in the later history we seem to see the process reversed. At any rate, we see the priestly office gradually gaining an ascendancy and the prophetic powers dwindling, and before long disappearing altogether. The turning-point of this change was, roughly speaking, the first return from the Exile, and the transition from the old to the new condition is most clearly seen in the prophet Ezekiel. The simplest and probably truest explanation of the change is that the prophets had done their work in condemning an unspiritual and more or less superstitious religious worship, in teaching the spirituality and holiness of God, and enforcing religion as a quickening moral power. The Exile, by removing the people from the allurements of Canaanitish idolatry, had stamped out idolatry and superstition. At the same time it had created a longing for a spiritual worship, based on the thought of Divine holiness on the one hand, and a strong sense of sin on the other. These feelings had their great advocate in Ezekiel, and found expression in the Code of Holiness (Lev. xvii-xxvi). To regard the priestly movement connected with the Restoration as a mere reaction is to misunderstand its spirit. The old sacrificial worship was spiritualised, and now became, at least more definitely, a symbolic representation of great religious truths. The question how far the elaboration of sacrificial worship marked by the later

developments of the Priestly Code should be regarded as a decadence in religious worship is beyond the scope of this present inquiry. But it is well to remember that the post-exilic age, which saw the decline and disappearance of the Prophets, saw also the issue of the greater part of the Psalter and of the Wisdom literature. Great as the Prophets were, they were not the only channels of inspiration, but God still revealed Himself in divers manners.

(iv) *The chief Characteristics of Prophetic Teaching.*

The contents of the prophecies naturally depend upon the circumstances in which each was written, but certain features may be regarded as generally characteristic. The prophets were essentially the exponents of *applied religion*¹, not of morality as such, or as primarily a thing for man's advantage whether spiritual or physical. Their first thought was, What has God said? Hence their ethical teaching, while eminently practical, was intensely religious. Man must be just, because a just God will punish injustice; he must be merciful, because a merciful God has all who need pity under His protection, and will not overlook oppression and wrong.

1. Hence it is that there was perhaps nothing which so moved the ire of the prophet as the social wrongs of the poor. It was constantly and violently roused by those 'who joined house to house, and field to field' (Isa. v. 8), and 'panted after the dust of the earth upon the head of the poor' (Amos ii. 7).

2. Compared with a righteous life, the formal worship of Jehovah was of no importance; without it, it was odious (Isa. i. 10-17; Jer. vi. 20, &c.).

3. But little less vehement was their denunciation of idolatry, and, with the northern prophets especially, a debased worship of Jehovah. But this also was closely connected with ethical religion. The worship of Moloch in particular involved human sacrifice, and very frequently the religious ceremonies in honour of heathen deities, possibly sometimes in that of Jehovah, at least in the north, were associated with lust, gluttony and drunkenness.

¹ It is this which makes the Bible 'the one book which appears to have the capacity of eternal self-adjustment, of uninterrupted correspondence with an ever-shifting and ever-widening environment.' Prof. S. H. Butcher, M.P., *Some Aspects of the Greek Genius*, p. 200.

4. Most important of all therefore, and the foundation of all their teaching, was the prophets' conception of the character of God. If not altogether new, it was urged by them with greater insistence, and the moral inferences from it were pressed to their logical conclusion. The attributes of God on which the greatest emphasis was laid were His absolute justice, His awful purity, and His fatherly love. Jehovah hated and would punish sin, but yearned to redeem and to purify His people. And yet He would not, and could not, save them without repentance and religious loyalty.

5. With the exception of Ezekiel, the appeal of the prophets is not to the individual, but rather to the national conscience¹. It is the nation that has sinned and deserves punishment and is urged to repentance. The responsibility of each soul before God is the special theme of Ezekiel, who recognised it as the corollary of God's justice (Ezek. xviii). Deutero-Isaiah, however, appeals rather to the nation Israel, the Servant of Jehovah (xli. 8, &c.); and yet with him it is largely a spiritualised, or at any rate idealised, conception.

6. It was this strongly national view of religion which made the prophets such keen politicians. Long custom had given them the right to intervene in affairs of the State. But their policy was always based on religious grounds. Isaiah was opposed at all times to foreign alliances, because they meant a want of faith in God's power to save. If an enemy had any power against Israel, it was because God was punishing them for their sins. And so he could look beyond the present or coming chastisement to the future religious restoration and prosperity of the surviving remnant. For the same reason Jeremiah forbade resistance to the Babylonian power, which he recognised as the instrument of God's wrath against an utterly corrupt nation, so that the only hope left was for its individual members who submitted to Babylon. That the prophets were shrewd observers is true, no doubt. They realised the danger likely to come from the great world-powers

¹ It has been sometimes pointed out that in national and public affairs the Prophets of the Old Testament have a greater present-day use than even the Epistles of the New Testament; for apart from doctrine and Church order the apostles wrote nearly always about individual right and wrongdoing, whereas the prophets were concerned with national sins and national policy.

of the day. But this only suggested the how; the why was the direct object of the prophet's message. Hosea, e. g., felt sure that Jehovah would punish an irreligious and immoral Israel; but he was by no means certain, at any rate at first, whether the avenging power would be Assyria or Egypt (see on xi. 3, 6, &c., especially note on p. xxv.).

7. The prophets were idealists. Their mission was not so much to predict a certain number of isolated events as to put forward an ideal, that of a Divine Kingdom on earth—an ideally perfect King ruling a righteous nation. And yet it was not as an imaginary ideal, but one which they believed was to be actually fulfilled. It has been truly said that the prophets put the golden age in the future. But this ideal could only be reached after a process of judgement which would sift out the righteous and destroy the wicked. The coming judgement and the Divine Kingdom are often represented in symbolic figures, the work of creative imagination. Thus we find in Isaiah, on the one side, a description of the whole world convulsed (xxiv), and, on the other, a charming picture of a future Paradise, when the cow and the bear would feed together, and they would not hurt nor destroy on all God's holy mountain (xi. 6-9). Nor did the prophets know when this Messianic age was to dawn. Isaiah looked for it, it would seem, in the birth of Hezekiah (ix. 1-7), whom he looked forward to as the deliverer from Assyria. Jeremiah and Ezekiel connected it with the return from exile (Jer. xxxi; Ezek. xxxvi. 16-38); the author of Daniel with the triumph of Judas Maccabæus.

(v) *The Poetical Features of the Prophetical Books.*

It is sometimes asked whether the Hebrew prophets should be considered poets. The answer obviously depends on what is meant by poetry. They certainly had, though in different degrees, the emotions and the imagination of the poet. In some cases, as in Deutero-Isaiah, they had certainly also the power of dramatic representation, as in xliv. 10-20. But were their thoughts and feelings expressed in poetical form? Certainly not, if judged by western or modern standards. The three common characteristics of modern poetry are rhyme,

rhythm, and measure. The Hebrew prophets certainly did not employ rhyme as a poetical ornament (see I. 3 (c), p. xxii). A certain tendency to both rhythm and measure, to the latter more especially, is noticeable in a few passages, as in parts of Isa. xi, but neither is a regular characteristic of the prophetic style nor, what is especially important for our purpose, to any great extent of Hebrew poetry generally.

The characteristics of Hebrew poetry must be considered quite apart from modern or even classical modes of poetical expression, and then we shall find that the prophetic books will bear comparison, more or less, with the undoubtedly poetical parts of the Old Testament. Its most constant features are similarity and contrast.

I. 1. The first shews itself in many ways, but the most characteristic feature is what is known as parallelism. By this is meant the occurrence of two or more successive lines or clauses containing the same or closely related ideas expressed with a certain similarity of construction. It admits of a great variety of forms, but is so constant as to be easily recognised.

(a) The most typical form is that of two lines exactly parallel in construction, and nearly synonymous in thought, as in Isa. i. 10 :

*Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom ;
Give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.*

In point of fact, the second clause is never quite synonymous, but really supplements the first. Here the real contrast in the two lines is between 'rulers' and 'people.' The prophet has a message for both high and low. On the other hand, the words Sodom and Gomorrah give precisely the same thought variously expressed.

(b) The commonest variation of this form is where one of the grammatical members of the first line, usually the verb, is not repeated in the second, as in Isa. i. 3. (Here, as also in Isa. xxxv. 5, the verb in Hebrew comes first.)

*Knoweth the ox his owner,
The ass his master's crib.*

The omission of the verb in the second line gives room to express the additional thought that the ass is at least alive to its own interest.

Sometimes even more is omitted in the second line, as in Isa. v. 18 :

*Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity,
And sin as it were with a cart rope.*

(c) The construction in the second clause is sometimes inverted with a very beautiful effect, as in Isa. xi. 1—

*There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse,
And a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit—*

where the inverted order gives force to the new thought conveyed in the second verb.

We have a curious example of a triple inversion in Isa. v. 20 :

*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil ;
That put darkness for light, and light for darkness ;
That put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter !*

(d) Sometimes there is a change of construction in the second line, as in Amos v. 16—

*In all the broadways [there shall be] wailing ;
In all the streets they shall say Ah ! Ah !—*

where the change introduces a graphic touch.

(e) In some cases the lines are parallels of thought rather than of construction, as in Hos. xi. 1—

*When Israel was a child, then I loved him,
And called my son out of Egypt—*

where the second line gives the special act which was a proof of God's fatherly love.

(f) Sometimes, more especially in proverbs and didactic passages, the second clause which is parallel in construction is contrasted in thought, as in Hos. xiv. 9 :

*And the just shall walk in them ;
But transgressors shall fall therein.*

(g) Occasionally a very striking effect is produced by a long series of parallels falling like the strokes of a blacksmith's hammer, as in Isa. ii. 12-16, where 'all' and 'every' are the same word in Hebrew. The monotony of sound suggests the completeness of the ruin. We have a similar effect produced in the six double parallels of Isa. xxiv. 2 :

*As with the people, so with the priest ;
As with the servant, so with the master ;
&c. &c.*

where the effect in Hebrew is even more striking, 'as' and 'so' being the same word.

(h) In some cases the parallelism is between alternate lines, as in Hos. ii. 7a :

*And she shall follow after her lovers,
But she shall not overtake them ;
And she shall seek them,
But she shall not find them.*

We have in Amos ix. 2-4 a succession of five such alternate parallels :

*Though they dig into Sheol,
Thence shall mine hand take them ;
And though they climb up to heaven,
Thence will I bring them down.
&c. &c.*

2. (a) Frequently the similarity shews itself in stanzas or paragraphs arranged with a common beginning, as Isa. v. 8, 11, &c. :

*Woe unto them that join house to house, &c.
Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning.
&c. &c.*

(b) Or still more frequently they have a common termination forming a sort of refrain, as in Isa. ix. 12, 17, &c. :

*For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.*

(c) In some striking examples the parallelism runs through the stanza. Thus, in Amos i-ii. 5 :

*Thus saith the LORD :
For three transgressions of . . . yea for four,
I will not turn away the punishment thereof ;
Because . . .
But I will send (kindle) a fire . . .
And it shall devour . . .*

is the framework into which the judgements on the various nations are fitted. We have beautiful examples of this continued parallelism, with much freer treatment in the latter case, in Pss. xlii. (xliii.) and cvii.

3. Assonance, i. e. similarity of sound in various forms, plays an important part in prophetic literature.

(a) Alliteration, due to the repetition of short prefixes, like the words for 'as (so)', 'all (every)', may be classified under I. 1 (g), p. xx., which see.

(b) There is a very striking example of alliteration in Isa. xxiv. 17, where the three words for 'snare,' 'pit,' 'fear,' *pachadh* (dh=th as in 'the'), *pachath*, and *pach*, are chosen to emphasise the thought that there is no escape from disaster.

(c) Examples of rhyme are not infrequent. In most cases the repetition of sound is intended to emphasise the meaning, as in our 'wear and tear,' 'toil and moil.' So we get *Thohu* and *Vohu* to express utter desolation in Isa. xxxiv. 11—

*He shall stretch over it the line of Thohu,
And the plummet of Vohu.*

These two words are the 'waste' and 'void' of Gen. i. 2. Similarly, in ver. 14 the prophet speaks of the *Tziyyim* as meeting with the *Iyyim*.

So too in Isa. xxix. 2, 'mourning and lamentation' are *tha'aniyyah wa'aniyyah*; and in xxviii. 10, 13, 'precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line,' are *tzav la-tzav, tzav la-tzav, qav la-qav, qav la-qav*.

(d) Of more frequent occurrence than any of these are plays on names. There was a very strong feeling among the Hebrews, as among many ancient peoples, that names in a real way expressed the character of the person or place. We have a well-known classical example of this in the line of Aeschylus:

Ἑλένας, ἑλάνδρος, ἐλέπτολις.

Ag. 690.

In the Prophets, plays on place-names are particularly frequent. In Mic. i. 10-16 there is a string of such puns on a large number of places, the names being regarded as signifying their fate. A very pretty use of the pun is made by Isaiah:

*I looked for judgement (mishpat) but behold oppression (mish-
pach),
For righteousness (tzedhakah), but behold a cry
(tze'akah).*

Here similarity of appearance is expressed by similarity of sound. The wild grapes looked like the good, but were in reality very different.

II. Remarkable effects, but less easy to analyse, were produced by contrast and variation.

1. We get very beautiful effects by what might be called, with some stretch of meaning, a change of metre, as in Isa. xi. 2-4, where the second of a number of even couplets is broken into by the new triplet :

*The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and might,
The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.*

2. A striking emphasis is often produced by a single short line added after a series of parallels, and forming a sort of close or semi-close. Such are

Isa. xi. 6. '*And a little child shall lead them.*'

Isa. i. 15. '*Your hands are full of blood.*'

3. A very solemn effect is sometimes produced by the sudden change from poetry into prose, as in Isa. ii. 5 :

*O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light
of the LORD—*

where the direct unadorned appeal is very forcible. Somewhat similarly, the very matter-of-fact list of ladies' articles of attire in Isa. iii. 18-23 gives a scornful tone to the passage.

It is not of course maintained that the whole of the prophetic books are poetry with touches of prose merely added for effect. Some parts are obviously merely prose narrative. Some few parts are obviously lyric poems, as for example the vine songs of Isa. v. 1-7 ; xxvii. 2-6. The great bulk of prophetic writing lies between these two extremes. But for the most part it yields abundant examples of those poetical features just pointed out, which are characteristic of the Psalms and other admittedly poetical parts of the Old Testament. And the reader would probably not go far wrong were he to regard it as practically all poetry, except those parts which are obviously historical narrative. But it should be realised that the prophet allowed himself a greater freedom of style than was customary in psalm writing. It is very possibly true that the traditional prophetic style was derived to some extent from the religious songs of the old prophet-priest. Partly by tradition, and partly, it may be, by religious training, the religious mood tended to express itself in a poetical way. I so,

the poetical features of the prophetic style belonged to some extent to the prophetic preaching and not only to the prophetic writing.

(vi) *The Retention of Poetical Features in the English Versions.*

It may be objected that the question whether the prophets wrote poetry or prose is not of great interest to the English reader, who can only approach them through a translation. There is some reason in this objection. It is certainly true that neither the A.V. nor R.V. reproduces, or could altogether reproduce, the conciseness of the original, and so far both are less forceful. For example, Jer. xvii. 11, 'As the partridge that gathereth *young* which she hath not brought forth, so is he that gathereth riches and not by right' (R.V.), is a prosy rendering of the Hebrew :

*A partridge [that] gathereth, but did not hatch (lay),
[So] a getter of riches, and not by right.*

But for the most part the peculiarities of Hebrew poetry lend themselves excellently to a translation. It seems almost impertinent to praise the beauty of the A.V., which the R.V. has been so careful to preserve, while it has thrown a flood of light on so many dark places of the Old Testament. But it is perhaps often hardly realised by the English reader how much the beauty of these versions depends upon the fact that they have followed so closely the simplicity of the Hebrew style. What has been said about Hebrew poetry, with the examples given, will, it is trusted, have shewn that even without a knowledge of the original language, the study of it is not only possible but full of interest. By the arrangement of lines of various lengths in the text of this edition it is designed to bring out the features here touched upon. It is hardly necessary to describe that arrangement in detail. It may be enough to say that the aim has been especially to emphasise the different forms of parallelism.

V. THE PREDICTIVE POWER OF THE PROPHETS.

It is often asked, To what extent were the prophets able to predict the future? or, to put it somewhat differently, To what extent were their predictions fulfilled? It is not a sufficient answer to urge that the Greek word 'prophet' means

a 'forthteller', not a 'foreteller'? For it is the Hebrew, not the Greek, that we have to deal with. It is interesting, no doubt, to know what conception the Alexandrian Jews in the second century B.C. may have formed of the functions of the Hebrew prophets; but it is far more important to know what the prophets and their contemporaries thought. Undoubtedly, the chief and most direct claim made by the prophets was to declare the will and mind of God. 'Thus saith Jehovah', 'The oracle of Jehovah', are phrases constantly in their mouths. And the prophets were held in honour just because this claim was acknowledged. But the will and mind of God of necessity concerned future dealings with His people. The whole attitude of the prophets was inevitably directed to the future. They claimed to declare as a message from God the only possible remedy for present evil, or how otherwise the existing sin of the nation demanded from a just God a terrible and crushing punishment. They anticipate that this punishment will fall at the hands of one of the great world-powers of the time, Egypt, Assyria, or Babylon. On the other hand, they foresee as a corollary of God's love a future redemption for His people, when the finally rebellious element has been sifted out and the remnant has been chastened and purified by calamity. But the exact way in which these two things are foretold, and even their relation to each other, varies according to the time and circumstances of each prophet. Not only so, but they vary with their hopes and fears or natural expectations. Isaiah at one time anticipates that Jerusalem would be brought to desolation at the hands of Assyria (vii. 20-25); at another time he boldly predicts that Sennacherib's campaign would end in complete disaster. He would do no more than shake his hand at Jerusalem, and Jehovah would intervene and cut down his army as a forest with iron (x. 32, 33); and, as we have seen, Hosea is quite uncertain at first whether the avenging power will be Egypt or Assyria (ix. 3-6, &c.)¹. It is clear that he would not have claimed for himself the exact foreknowledge which Christian apologists have sometimes claimed for the prophets. To a large extent the pictures of the future drawn by the prophets are merely ideal representations designed to

¹ It would seem from vii. 18 that Isaiah in his early prophecies also anticipated danger from Egypt.

make the prediction more vivid and real, as in the march of the Assyrian army so graphically described in Isa. x. 28-32. It is as though a prophet were to arise among ourselves, and after denouncing the great evils of the day—sweating, commercial frauds, and the like—were to give a vivid description of some ‘battle of Dorking’ or ‘the Yellow peril.’

VI. THE RELATION OF PROPHECY TO CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY.

But what many feel to be a more serious question lies behind this. What relation do the prophecies bear to the historic Christ? The New Testament writers claim many events in the history which they record as fulfilments of definite prophecies. Were they right? The answer depends upon what we understand by ‘fulfilments’ and ‘definite prophecies.’ It is true that the New Testament writers and the Fathers of the Church believed that many of these events were actually and in detail predicted. And there is a sense in which their application of certain passages of the Old Testament to events in the New may be justified. At any rate, in fairness to these writers, we must bear in mind that their interpretation of these prophecies really belongs to that allegorical method of treating Holy Scripture which was part of the intellectual habit of the age¹. In any particular passage there were to them many meanings latent, while they regarded the Old Testament as a whole as distinctly pointing to the Messiah. In this attitude there is, no doubt, a considerable truth. We can thoroughly understand how many a devout modern mind finds no difficulty in transferring passages, obviously and originally intended for Israel—whether the actual nation as in Hos. xi. 1, or the more idealised nation as in ‘the Servant of Jehovah’ of the Deutero-Isaiah—to the history of Him who, fulfilling as we believe He did, the very highest object for which that nation existed, was its Ideal Representative and glory².

¹ For example, Philo argued that the silence of Scripture as to Cain’s death pointed to the eternity of evil; the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, it will be remembered, used a similar argument for the eternal priesthood of Christ (vii. 3). Similarly, S. Matthew (ii. 23) seemed to see in the use of the word Branch (*netzer*) in Isa. xi. 1 a prediction connecting the Messiah with Nazareth.

² Dr. Sanday, in comparing the manlike figure of Dan. vii. 18 with that

There can be no doubt that many of the arguments adduced concerning this subject have not the same cogency for us as they had for the early Church. But it is not any disparagement of the prophets that they did not do what they do not claim to do, and which on the highest grounds was far less than they really did. And yet when we deal with the larger facts of Christianity the case is different. Some hesitation may naturally be felt in positively affirming that the prophets plainly foresaw that One would be born in the world who should be God as well as man, and that He would die a shameful death to atone for the world's sin, and then rise again, or that there would be a general resurrection of the dead. Nevertheless, we may fairly hold that the language of Isa. ix. 1-7; xi. 1-5; liii.; Hos. xiii. 14; Ezek. xxxvii. 1-14 leads up to such conceptions, and that the prophets were half unconsciously feeling after such truths; and, at any rate, we may say confidently that the book of Isaiah presents an ideal of Divine Kingship and of atoning suffering which was only realised in Jesus the King. Yet it may be that, in the first instance, the prophet had in his mind the newborn king Hezekiah, and in the second, an idealised Israel, and that at most the resurrection foreshadowed in Hosea and Ezekiel and Isaiah was partial and national, and possibly in Ezekiel's case only a figure of speech¹.

VII. THE NATURE OF THE PROPHETIC GIFT.

It remains to speak briefly of a most difficult and yet interesting question, the nature of the prophetic gift itself. There was a time when it was universally believed that the prophets were merely the passive instruments of Divine revelation; that they were, to use an old simile, like flutes on which the Holy Spirit played. No serious student of the prophets would now accept that view. They betray, on almost every page, a character both human and individual, influenced by as well as influencing, their surroundings. They did not possess, and do not claim, an exact knowledge of the future.

of the Book of Enoch, shews how natural to the Jew was the transition of thought from 'the purified and regenerate Israel to the personal Messiah.' *Life of Christ in recent Research*, p. 126.

¹ See the notes on Isa. ix. 1-7; xi.; xxvi. 19; Hos. xiii. 14; Ezek. xxxvii. 1-14; xxvi. 19.

Jonah is rebuked for supposing that the exact fulfilment of his words was of more importance than the vindication of God's mercy (iv. 9-11). On the other hand, the Divine character of their religious teaching is stamped upon it unmistakably. We feel sure that it is Divine, not merely in the sense that they are repeating a divinely-given tradition of the past, but that there is a divinity in the very utterance of truth, not of course in its outward expression, but in its spiritual power and enlightenment. So 'holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'

How is this to be explained? Does it mean any more than this? That by the Holy Spirit their natural faculties, and those too specially developed, in some cases, by custom and heredity, were strengthened in an unusual degree; that the prophets were empowered to put forth and energise these natural faculties, to do their very utmost in the cause of God; that their minds were enlightened to see clearly the things that belonged to God? Or, on the other hand, does it mean beyond this, that new truths were presented to their spiritual vision, though not of course exactly in the same way in which, by use of their imaginative faculty, they presented them to others?¹ Whichever view is the true one, and we probably have no data for dogmatising on the question, the inspiration is essentially the work of God, not merely the unaided effort of human will and human understanding. For us of the twentieth century the article of the ancient Creed is still true: 'I believe in the Holy Ghost . . . Who spake by the Prophets.'

¹ "To the Greeks was given the leadership among men in the world of philosophy and the pursuit of beauty, as to the Romans in the world of government and law; but the Jewish race was called to be, by its prophets, 'the sacred school of the knowledge of God and of the spiritual life for all mankind.' S. Athanasius." Gore, *The New Theology and the Old Religion*, p. 45.

PASSAGES QUOTED OR REFERRED TO IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Amos v. 25-27 ...	Acts vii. 42, 43	Isaiah vii. 14	Mat. i. 23
ix. 11, 12 ...	xv. 16, 17	viii. 12, 13	I Pet. iii. 14, 15
Hosea i. 10.....	Rom. ix. 26	viii. 14	Rom. ix. 33
ii. 1, 23	ix. 25, 26	viii. 17, 18	Heb. ii. 13
	I Pet. ii. 10	ix. 1, 2.....	Mat. iv. 15, 16
vi. 6.....	Mat. ix. 13		Luke ii. 32
	xii. 7	x. 22, 23.....	Rom. ix. 27, 28
x. 8	Luke xxiii. 30	xi. 1	Mat. ii. 23
	Rev. vi. 16	xi. 10	Rom. xv. 12
	ix. 6	xxii. 13	I Cor. xv. 32
xi. 1	Mat. ii. 15	xxv. 8 ..	xv. 54
xiii. 14	I Cor. xv. 55	xxvii. 9	Rom. xi. 26, 27
xiv. 2	Heb. xiii. 15	xxviii. 11, 12 ...	I Cor. xiv. 21
Isaiah i. 9	Rom. ix. 29	xxviii. 16	Rom. ix. 33
vi. 9, 10	Mat. xiii. 14, 15		I Pet. ii. 6
	Mark iv. 12	xxix. 10	Rom. xi. 8
	Luke viii. 10	xxix. 13	Mat. xv. 8, 9
	John xii. 40, 41		Mark vii. 6, 7
	Acts xxviii. 26, 27	xxix. 14	I Cor. i. 19
	Rom. xi. 8	Micah v. 2	Mat. ii. 16

A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE¹ FOR THE FIRST VOLUME

B.C.	PROPHETS AND KINGS OF ISRAEL	PROPHETS AND KINGS OF JUDAH	GENERAL HISTORY	BIBLE REFERENCES
Circa 1040 c.877-c.853 c.860	SAMUEL ² ELIJAH .		. . . Revolt of Mesha, king of Moab (Moabite stone)	1 Sam. i—xxv. 1 Kings xvii ff. 2 Kings iii. 5. See note on Isa. xv. 2; xvi. 1.
854 ³	.	.	First conflict of Israel and Syria with Assyria at the battle of Karkar, when Ahab and Benhadad were defeated.	Cf. 1 Kings xx. 34 and xxii. 1, and see note on Amos vi. 2.
c.853-c.798 836	ELISHA .	.	Hazael, king of Syria, subdues Gilead, attacks Gath, but is bought off from Jerusalem. ⁴	2 Kings ii ff. 2 Kings viii. 12; x. 32, 33; xiii. 7; Amos i. 3; iv. 10. Amos i. 1; vii. 9-11.
783-743 c.780	Jeroboam II. JONAH ⁵	.	.	2 Kgs. xiv. 25. Cf. Jonah i. 1.
779-740	.	Uzziah	.	2 Kings xv. 1-7; 2 Chron. xxvi.
775-765	.	.	Jeroboam II conquers Moab, Gilead, and part of Syria	2 Kings xiv. 25, 28. Cf. Amos vi. 13.
763 c.760-c.745	AMOS	.	Total eclipse of the sun visible in Palestine	Cf. Amos viii. 9. See note on Amos i. 1.
PERIOD OF ASSYRIAN ASCENDANCY				
c.750-c.625. c.750	.	Jotham (as re- gent)	.	2 Kings xv. 5. 2 Kings xv. 19.
745-727 743-741	.	.	Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul), king of Assyria.	Isa. x. 9. Cf. xxxvii. 13.
c.743-727 740	HOSEA . Zechariah, Shallum, and Menahem	.	Arpad in Syria besieged and taken by Assyria	See note on Hosea i. 1. Isa. vi. 1. See note on Hosea vi. 3, 7; viii. 4; 2 Kings xv. 8-22.
740-c.700	.	Jotham (as sole ruler)	.	See note on Isa. i. 1; 2 Kings xix. 2, &c.
738	Pekahiah .	ISAIAH .	Menahem pays tribute to Tiglath-Pileser	2 Kings xv. 19. Cf. Hosea v. 14; vii. 11; viii. 9.

736		Ahaz							2 Kings xv. 38, &c. See note on Isa. iii. 12.
735	Pekah								2 Kings xv. 29; Isa. vii.
734									2 Kings xv. 29; Isa. ix. 1.
733-722(?)	Hoshea								2 Kings xv. 30; xvii. 1, &c.
(?) 732-698 ⁸		Hezekiah.							2 Kings xvi. 20, &c.; Isa. xxxvi ff., and see note on Isa. vii. 14.
732									2 Kings xvi. 8-10. Cf. Isa. viii. 4; xvii. 1.
727-722									2 Kings xvii. 4; xviii. 9. Cf. Hosea x. 7, 14.
725									Micah i. 6; 2 Kings xvii. 6; xviii. 10-12.
722-705									2 Kings xx. 12; Isa. xxxix. 1.
721									2 Kings xvii. 24. Isa. xx. 1.
720									2 Kings xviii. 13-xix. 35.
715									Isa. xxxvii. 36.
711									2 Kings xxi. 1. See note on Micah vi. 7.
705-681									Isa. xxxvii. 9.
704-701									Isa. xxxvii. 38.
701									
(?) 698-641 ⁶		Manasseh, MICAH vi, vii?							
692									
681									

¹ This table is compiled mainly from the *Encycl. Britannica* (tenth edition) xxvii, with help from *Encycl. Biblica* i. 790 ff. and G. A. Smith's *Book of the Twelve*. ² Before the disruption of the Kingdom (933 B.C.). ³ This is 'the earliest date available, as being certain beyond doubt, for an attempt to set the chronology of the Old Testament on a firm basis.' *Encycl. Bibl.* i. 791. ⁴ Freed from both Hittite and Assyrian domination Syria, at this time, developed into the most formidable power in the west (see 1 Kings xi). ⁵ The Book of Jonah probably belongs to a later date (see *in loco*). ⁶ These dates are very uncertain; *Encycl. Bibl.* gives Hezekiah 720-693 and Manasseh 692-639 (i. 797). ⁷ Syria (Aram) so impressed itself upon its victors, that the Aramaic language became the common speech of trade and diplomacy, and gradually supplanted Assyrian in Assyria and Hebrew in Palestine.

A GLOSSARY

OF

WORDS EITHER OBSCURE OR OBSOLETE

- Ancients**, persons advanced in years, not those of old time. Isa. iii. 2, 5; ix. 15; xxiv. 23.
- Angle**, a fishing-rod or line with hook. Isa. xix. 8.
- Away with**, go on the same way with; hence endure. Isa. i. 13.
- Bath**, a Hebrew fluid measure (72 pints), equal to the ephah in dry measure; each one-tenth of an homer. Isa. v. 10; Ezek. xlv. 11.
- Bestead**, situated (A.S. *stæde*, a place); see **Hardly bestead**. Isa. viii. 21.
- Bewray**, accuse, make evident, reveal; very similar to betray, but not implying treachery. Isa. xvi. 3.
- Bravery**, splendour (Fr. *braver*, to vaunt). Isa. iii. 18.
- Bunch**, a prominence, hump (Ice. *bunki*, a heap). Isa. xxx. 6.
- Caul**, a net for the hair, hence any kind of membrane. Isa. iii. 18; Hos. xiii. 8.
- Churl**, a rough, rude person (A.S. *ceorl*, a serf). Isa. xxxii. 5, 7.
- Consult**, to plan, purpose, contrive, devise. Mic. vi. 5 (see Hab. ii. 10, and Ps. lxii. 4).
- Crib**, a manger, or stall for cattle. Isa. i. 3.
- Day**, an appointed time. Isa. ii. 12, &c.
- Defenced**, fortified. Isa. xxv. 2; xxvii. 10.
- Discover**, strip off, lay bare. Mic. i. 6; Hos. ii. 10.
- Dread**, often of awe and reverence rather than terror. Isa. viii. 13.
- Excellence**¹, pride, majesty, glory. Amos vi. 8; viii. 7; Isa. iv. 2; xii. 5; xxxv. 2.
- Fenced**, fortified. Hos. viii. 14; Isa. ii. 15; xxxvi. 1; xxxvii. 26.
- Fitches**, vetches. Isa. xxviii. 25, 27.
- Fuller**, a cleaner or bleacher of cloth. Isa. vii. 3; xxxvi. 2.
- Gallant**, splendid, magnificent. Isa. xxxiii. 21.
- Galley**, a low, flat-built vessel with one or more rows of oars. Isa. xxxiii. 21.
- Go to**, come now. Isa. v. 5.
- Hardly bestead**, placed in difficult or painful circumstances (see **Bestead**). Isa. viii. 21.
- Latchet**, a lace for shoe, or strap for sandal. Isa. v. 27.
- Lees**, that which *lies* at the bottom, sediment or dregs of a liquid. Isa. xxv. 6.
- Like** (*v.t.*), to please. Amos iv. 5.
- Lodge**, a watchman's hut (Fr. *loge*, a lodging). Isa. i. 8.
- Mean**, low in rank and dignity, not necessarily base. Isa. ii. 9; v. 15.
- Mincing**, cutting small, affected. Isa. iii. 16.
- Mollify**, soften, ease, assuage. Isa. i. 6.
- Munition**, a fortification, stronghold. Isa. xxxiii. 16.
- Poll**, to cut or shear the head. Mic. i. 16.
- Scant**, insufficient, short. Mic. vi. 10.
- Securely**, without care (L. *securus*). Mic. ii. 8.
- Sherd**, a shred, or portion shorn off; e.g. potsherd. Isa. xxx. 14.
- Silly**, innocent, simple (A.S. *sælig*, blessed). Hos. vii. 11.
- Silverling**, a silver coin (Ger. *silberling*). Isa. vii. 23.
- Solemnities**, appointed feasts (L. *solemnus*, stated, fixed). Isa. xxxiii. 20.
- Solemn**, appointed. Hos. ii. 11; ix. 5; xii. 9.
- Stomacher**, woman's dress worn on bosom (L. *stomachus*, gullet). Isa. iii. 24.
- Stout**, proud (Ger. *stolz*). Isa. x. 12.
- Stoutness**, stubbornness. Isa. ix. 9.

¹ 'The root idea of *gā'on*, *ga'avāh*, *gē'uth* is, it is true, to rise up, grow tall (see Ezek. xlvii. 5; Job viii. 11), which is also that of the Lat. *excellō*; but no one can pretend that this sense is perceptible in the English words *excellent* and *excellency*, and in the Hebrew words also the primary physical sense has largely given way to the derived metaphorical one.' Driver, *Cambridge Bible*: 'Joel and Amos,' p. 238 note.

AMOS

INTRODUCTION

WE know more about Amos than perhaps any other of the Minor Prophets. Although he belonged to the kingdom of Judah, and lived at Tekoa, an outlying town twelve miles SSE. of Jerusalem, his prophecies were delivered in the Northern Kingdom. Under Jeroboam II, the most popular and able of the Northern Kings (782-743 B.C.), Israel's highest point of military glory and temporal prosperity was reached. Syria had long oppressed Israel, but, aided partly no doubt indirectly by the effects on Syria of the growing power of Assyria¹, Jeroboam not only recovered the ten cities which Joash his father had lost (2 Kings xiii. 25; see note on Amos vi. 13), but even seems to have made Damascus tributary to Israel (2 Kings xiv. 28). But all this success and splendour unhappily proved the nation's ruin. Luxury and self-indulgence quickly undermined their religion and morals (Amos iii. 15; v. 11; vi. 7, 8, 11). Their worship at the sanctuaries of Beth-el (vii. 13), Gilgal, and Beersheba (iv. 4; v. 5; viii. 14) was debased and unspiritual. The rich—greedy and rapacious—perverted justice (ii. 6, 8; v. 7; vi. 12) and oppressed the poor (ii. 7; iii. 10; iv. 1; v. 11; viii. 4, 6), and all classes appear to have been tainted with worldliness and immorality (ii. 7, 12).

It was to prophesy against these vices that Amos, the 'herdman and dresser of sycamore trees' (i. 1; vii. 14), was called. The date of his mission is not known, but if, as may reasonably be supposed, the solar eclipse of 763 B.C. suggested the language of vii. 8, 9 (where see note), we should probably be right in placing it shortly after that year.

Emphatically one of the people, belonging to no prophetic school (vii. 14), he was yet assured that God had laid upon him the burden which he was constrained to deliver (iii. 8; vii. 15)—the downfall of the royal house, the destruction of the temples, and the captivity of the people. While convinced that all this disorder and self-indulgence called for God's punishment, Amos probably realised the westward movement of the great Assyrian power, and knew that it was fraught with danger to Israel and would eventually prove her scourge.

¹ See Introduction to Nahum in vol. ii.

Beth-el, the seat of the royal temple, was the principal scene of his preaching, and his discourses and 'prophetic visions' were probably afterwards written down by him on his return to Tekoa. His book furnishes remarkable evidence of the finished literary style which even a 'herdman' was able to cultivate about 2,700 years ago. Dr. Pusey has well called him a 'child of nature', for the discourses abound in images derived from the occupation and surroundings of the prophet; and yet these images 'never strike the reader', says Dr. Driver, 'as occurring too frequently or as out of place.' But the book is, perhaps, even more remarkable for its lofty moral ideals and broad views of the world in relation to God. His prophecy is almost one continued pronouncement of the doom of Israel; and yet he is convinced that God's judgements are absolutely just, for in His sifting 'shall not the least grain fall upon the earth' (ix. 9). Besides this, his main contribution to religious truth was that God was not a tribal deity as the Israelites were apt to suppose (iii. 2), but One whose rule extended alike over heathen and covenanted people (see i. 3—ii. 3; ix. 7). This rule is a moral rule; no ceremonial observance can ever take the place of a religious life; for the world is a moral order, and calamities have a moral message. While to Hosea, another prophet to the Northern Kingdom, Israel's sin was an outrage on Divine love, to Amos it was especially a provocation of Divine justice.

An interesting tradition, handed down by Epiphanius¹, says that after being beaten nearly to death at Beth-el (cf. v. 10) Amos was carried home to Tekoa to die, his tomb being shewn there in the time of S. Jerome fourth (century).

¹ Epiphanius, *Lives of the Prophets*, ii. 145.

AMOS

The Superscription. i. 1.

1 THE words of Amos, who was among the herdmen^a of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam^b the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the¹ earthquake^c.

¹ See
Zech. xiv. 5.

Part I.

ISRAEL INCLUDED IN THE ARRAIGNMENT OF NATIONS. THE PUNISHMENT OF 'MAN'S IN-HUMANITY TO MAN'. i. 2—ii. 16.

THE PRELUDE. i. 2.

The terrible revelation of Jehovah's wrath.

2 And he said,
The LORD shall roar from Zion,
And utter his voice from Jerusalem^d;
And the² pastures of the shepherds shall mourn,² Or,
And the top of Carmel shall wither. *habitations*

I. EIGHT NATIONS ARRAIGNED. i. 3—ii. 8.

1. Syria. i. 3-5.

3 Thus saith the LORD:
For three transgressions of Damascus, yea, for four^e,
I will not³ turn away⁴ the punishment thereof;³ Or, *revoke my word*
Because they have threshed Gilead with threshing⁴ Heb. *it*
instruments of iron^f: (and so in vv. 6, 9, &c.).

^a This word implies the rearers of a special breed of ugly, stunted sheep, valued because of their wool. See vii. 14.

^b See vii. 10.

^c As Palestine is subject to earthquakes, this in Uzziah's reign, referred to also in Zech. xiv. 5, must have been of extraordinary severity (see iv. 11; viii. 8).

^d See iii. 8; Jer. xxv. 30; Joel iii. 16, who is probably quoting this passage. The voice of God through prophecy is described as executing the judgment which it threatens (cf. Hos. vi. 5). The metaphor is taken partly from the roaring of the lion, partly from the blasting effects of the sirocco. Jerusalem is mentioned, as containing God's 'holy habitation', and because Amos came from the Southern Kingdom.

^e This 'ascending enumeration' (cf. Job v. 19; xxxiii. 29; Prov. xxx. 15-31; Mic. v. 5) here implies superabundance of wickedness.

^f These were often armed with sharp spikes. For torturing an enemy to death in a somewhat similar fashion, cf. 2 Sam. xii. 31.

¹ Or, *him that sitteth on the throne* (and so in ver. 8)
[†] ² That is, *Vanity*. The Sept. reads, *On*.

³ Or, *Beth-eden*

But I will send a fire^a into the house of Hazael^b, 4
 And it shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad.
 And I will break the bar^c of Damascus, 5
 And cut off¹ the inhabitant from the valley of
² Aven^d,
 And him that holdeth the sceptre from³ the
 house of Eden:
 And the people of Syria shall go into captivity
 unto Kir,
 Saith the LORD.

2. *Philistia.* i. 6-8.

⁴ Heb. *an entire captivity*.

Thus saith the LORD: 6
 For three transgressions of Gaza, yea, for four,
 I will not turn away the punishment thereof;
 Because they carried away captive⁴ the whole
 people^e, to deliver them up to Edom:
 But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, 7
 And it shall devour the palaces thereof:
 And I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, 8
 And him that holdeth the sceptre from
 Ashkelon;
 And I will turn mine hand against Ekron^f,
 And the remnant of the Philistines shall perish,
 Saith the Lord God.

3. *Phœnicia.* i. 9, 10.

Thus saith the LORD: 9
 For three transgressions of Tyre, yea, for four,
 I will not turn away the punishment thereof;

N.B. An obelus (†) attached to a marginal note shews that the alternative rendering or reading is preferred, or calls attention to some other important point.

^a The flame of war. Cf. Hos. viii. 14.

^b The dynasty founded by that powerful king of Damascus (2 Kings viii. 15) who lived a century before Amos. Almost continuously from 880 to 800 B.C. Syria, then an important power, had been at war with Israel, often punishing it severely. Ben-hadad was Hazael's successor of that name, or possibly a king of Syria in the time of Amos.

^c Eastern gates were generally fastened by strong iron bars. Ps. cvii. 16.

^d The valley (*bi'ah*) is probably the Plain of Cœle-Syria, and may have been called 'the valley of vanity' from the sun-worship in the great Temple of Baalbek (see *Hastings's Dict.*, i. 204). For 'vanity', of idol worship, cf. v. 5; Hos. x. 5.

'Eden,' possibly 'some royal Paradise in that region which is still the Paradise of the Arab world.' (G. A. Smith.) It is very uncertain where Kir was situated, possibly near the Caspian Sea, or if Kir be the same as Koa, the mountainous district north of Babylon.

^e The special events alluded to here and in ver. 9 are unknown. Probably raids are referred to in which whole populations were sold as slaves.

^f For the omission of Gath only from the five cities of the Philistines, see note on vi. 2.

Because they delivered up ¹the whole people ^ato ¹Heb.

Edom,

*an entire
captivity.*

And remembered not ²the brotherly covenant ^b:

¹ Heb. *the
covenant of
brethren.*

10 But I will send a fire on the wall of Tyre,

And it shall devour the palaces thereof.

See 1 Kings
v. 1, ix. 11-14.

4. *Edom.* i. 11, 12.

11 Thus saith the LORD :

For three transgressions of Edom, yea, for four,

I will not turn away the punishment thereof ;

Because he did pursue his brother with the sword,

And ³did cast off all pity,

³ Heb.
*corrupted
his compas-
sions.*

And his anger did tear perpetually,

And he kept his wrath for ever ^c :

12 But I will send a fire upon Teman,

And it shall devour the palaces of Bozrah ^d.

5. *Ammon.* i. 13-15.

13 Thus saith the LORD :

For three transgressions of the children of

Ammon, yea, for four,

I will not turn away the punishment thereof ;

Because they have ripped up the women with child
of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border :

14 But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah ^e,

And it shall devour the palaces thereof,

With shouting in the day of battle,

With a tempest in the day of the whirlwind :

15 And their king shall go into captivity,

He and his princes together,

Saith the LORD.

6. *Moab.* ii. 1-3.

2 Thus saith the LORD :

For three transgressions of Moab, yea, for four,

I will not turn away the punishment thereof ;

Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom
into lime ^f :

2 But I will send a fire upon Moab,

And it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth ^g ;

^a See note on ver. 6.

^b See 1 Kings v. 12, although treaties with other nations are probably meant as well.

^c Cf. Obad. 10.

^d Bozrah, an important town (cf. Isa. xxxiv. 6) ; Teman, a district or clan (Gen. xxxvi. 34) of Edom.

^e The capital (2 Sam. xi, xii).

^f The king was probably burnt alive in a brick-kiln. Cf. 2 Sam. xii. 31.

^g An important city of Moab. Cf. Jer. xlviii. 41.

And Moab shall die with tumult,
 With shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet :
 And I will cut off the judge from the midst 3
 thereof,
 And will slay all the princes thereof with him,
 Saith the LORD.

7. *Judah.* ii. 4, 5.

Thus saith the LORD : 4
 For three transgressions of Judah, yea, for four,
 I will not turn away the punishment thereof ;
 Because they have rejected the law of the LORD,
 And have not kept his statutes,
 And their lies have caused them to err,
 After the which their fathers did walk ^a :
 But I will send a fire upon Judah, 5
 And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

8. *Israel.* ii. 6-8.

Thus saith the LORD : 6
 For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four,
 I will not turn away the punishment thereof ;
 Because they have sold the righteous for silver,
 And the needy for a pair of shoes :
 That pant ^b after the dust of the earth on the head 7
 of the poor,
 And turn aside the way of the meek :
 And a man and his father will go unto the *same*
¹ maid, to profane my holy name ^c :
 And they lay themselves down beside every altar 8
 upon clothes ² taken in pledge ^d,
 And in the house of their God they drink the wine
 of such as have been fined ^e.

¹ Or, *young woman*

² See Ex. xxii. 26.

^a Judah and Israel (see ii. 9-12), unlike the other nations, are judged by a religious and not only a moral standard.

^b Silver is costly, and even a pair of shoes of some value, but so greedy are the rich that they eagerly strive after what is worthless, and even filthy, the very dust on the head of the poor. Perhaps there is the further thought that these are too poor to have any head-covering. Cf. Isa. xl. 15.

^c It is not improbable that there is a reference here to the licentious worship of Ashtaroth, whose devotees were called 'holy'. See note on Hos. iv. 12-14.

^d Reclined at their sacrificial feasts on pawned garments, which should have been returned to their owners before night (Exod. xxii. 26; Deut. xxiv. 12, 13).

^e The poor whom they have robbed by unjust suits.

II. ISRAEL'S GUILT IS AGGRAVATED, BECAUSE THEY WERE INDEBTED TO GOD (i) FOR THEIR NATIONAL EXISTENCE, AND (ii) FOR THEIR LEADERS WHOM THEY SOUGHT TO PERVERT AND SILENCE. ii. 9-12.

9 Yet destroyed I the Amorite^a before them,
 Whose height was like the height of the cedars,
 And he was strong as the oaks ;
 Yet I destroyed his fruit from above,
 And his roots from beneath.

10 Also I brought you up out of the land of Egypt,
 And led you forty years in the wilderness,
 To possess the land of the Amorite.

11 And I raised up of your sons for prophets,
 And of your young men for Nazirites^b.
 Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel ?
 Saith the LORD.

12 But ye gave the Nazirites wine to drink ;
 And commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy
 not.

III. ISRAEL'S PUNISHMENT IS THEREFORE CRUSHING, AND THEIR BRAVEST ARE SEEN TO BE HELPLESS AND PANIC-STRICKEN. ii. 13-16.

13 Behold, ¹ I will press *you* in your place,
 As a cart presseth that is full of sheaves^c.
 14 And ² flight shall perish from the swift,
 And the strong shall not strengthen his force,
 Neither shall the mighty deliver ³ himself :
 15 Neither shall he stand that handleth the bow ;
 And he that is swift of foot shall not deliver
himself :
 Neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver
³ himself :
 16 And he that is courageous among the mighty
 shall flee away naked in that day,
 Saith the LORD.

¹ Or, *I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves*

² Or, *refuge shall fail the swift*†

³ Heb. *his soul, or, life.*

^a One of the most important of the old Canaanitish tribes, frequently put for the Canaanites generally.

^b See Num. vi. 1-21.

^c Amos would probably have his hearers recall the ruts which a heavy wagon makes in the harvest-field.

Part II.

A THREATENING DISCOURSE TO ISRAEL, WHOSE FORMAL WORSHIP AND IMMORAL LIFE NECESSITATE GOD'S HEAVY JUDGEMENT. iii—vi.

I. ADDRESSED PRINCIPALLY TO THE WEALTHIER CLASSES. iii—iv. 3.

- (1) *ISRAEL'S PRIVILEGED CONDITION MAKES THEIR RESPONSIBILITY ALL THE GREATER.*

iii. 1, 2.

Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against **3** you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt, saying,

You only have I known^a of all the families of the 2 earth:

Therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities.

- (2) *SINCE NOTHING HAPPENS BY CHANCE, THE PROPHET'S MESSAGE MUST BE FROM GOD, AND GOD'S MESSAGE BY THE PROPHET SPELLS DISASTER.* iii. 3-8.

+¹ Or, *made an appointment*

Shall two walk together, except they have ¹ agreed ^b? **3**
Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no **4**
prey?

Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?

Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no **5**
gin is *set* for him?

Shall a snare spring up from the ground, and have taken nothing at all?

Shall the trumpet be blown in a city, and the **6**
people not be afraid?

Shall evil befall a city, and the LORD hath not done it^c?

Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth **7**
his secret unto his servants the prophets.

The lion hath roared, who will not fear? **8**

The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?

^a i.e. regarded with favour. Cf. Gen. xviii. 19; Hos. xiii. 5, &c., and see note on Hos. viii. 2.

^b In the wilderness where Amos lived 'men meet and take the same road by chance as seldom as ships at sea'. (G. A. Smith.)

^c 'Evil which is sin, the Lord hath not done; evil which is punishment for evil, the Lord bringeth.' (St. Augustine.)

(3) *THE NATION'S SINS DEMAND IMMINENT PUNISHMENT.* iii. 9—iv. 3.

Israel's enemies called to witness the moral disorder.

iii. 9—10.

- 9 Publish ye ¹ in the palaces at Ashdod ^a, ¹ Or, *upon*
 And ¹ in the palaces in the land of Egypt,
 And say, Assemble yourselves upon the mount-
 ains of Samaria,
 And behold what great tumults are therein,
 And what oppressions in the midst thereof.
 10 For they know not to do right,
 Saith the LORD,
 Who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.

The sentence: An insignificant remnant shall escape the invading foe, who will destroy altars and palaces.
 iii. 11—15.

- 11 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD :
 An adversary *there shall be*, even round about
 the land :
 And he shall bring down thy strength from thee,
 And thy palaces shall be spoiled.
 12 Thus saith the LORD :
 As the shepherd rescueth out of the mouth of
 the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear ;
 So shall the children of Israel be rescued that sit
 in Samaria in the corner of a couch,
 And ² on the silken cushions of a bed ^b.
 13 Hear ye, and testify against the house of Jacob,
 Saith the Lord GOD, the God of hosts.
 14 For in the day that I shall visit the transgressions
 of Israel upon him, ² According
to some
ancient
versions and
MSS., *in
Damascus
on a bed.*
 I will also visit the altars of Beth-el ^c,
 And the horns of the altar shall be cut off,
 And fall to the ground.
 15 And I will smite ³ the winter house with ⁴ the ³ See Jer.
 summer house ; xxxvi. 22. †
 And the houses of ivory ^d shall perish, ⁴ See
Judg. iii. 20.
 And ⁵ the great houses shall have an end, ⁵ Or, *many*
 Saith the LORD.

^a See note on i. 8.

^b A graphic picture of the luxurious life, lolling upon divans, of those of whom only a small remnant would survive.

^c See note on v. 5.

^d Probably so called because of chambers in them inlaid with ivory (cf. Ps. xlv. 8), similar to those existing in Damascus and other Oriental cities to-day. Ahab may have introduced the fashion from Syria (1 Kings xxii. 39).

*The ladies of Israel : their cruelty and drunkenness
will end in capture and degradation.* iv. 1-3.

Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan ^a, that are in the **4**
mountain of Samaria,

Which oppress the poor, which crush the needy,
Which say unto their lords, Bring, and let us drink.

The Lord GOD hath sworn by his holiness, **2**

That, lo, the days shall come upon you,

That they shall take you away with hooks,

And your residue with fish hooks ^b.

And ye shall go out at the breaches ^c, every **3**
one straight before her ;

¹ And ye shall cast *yourselves* into Harmon ^d,
Saith the LORD.

¹The ancient
versions
vary in their
rendering of
this clause.
The text is
probably
corrupt.

II. ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL, WHOSE GUILT IS AGGRAVATED BY THEIR IMPENITENCE. iv. 4-13.

(1) *THEY ARE IRONICALLY URGED TO CARRY OUT THEIR WILFULLY DEVISED WORSHIP.* iv. 4, 5.

Come to Beth-el, and transgress ; **4**

To Gilgal, *and* multiply transgression ^e ;

And bring your sacrifices every morning,

And your tithes every three days ;

And ² offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that **5**
which is leavened,

And proclaim freewill offerings and publish them:

For this liketh you, O ye children of Israel,

Saith the Lord God.

² Heb. *offer
by burning.*

(2) *PREVIOUS VISITATIONS ARE IN VAIN.* iv. 6-11.

Famine. iv. 6.

And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all **6**
your cities, and want of bread in all your places :

Yet have ye not returned unto me,

Saith the LORD.

^a Bashan was famous for its cattle (Deut. xxxii. 14). See note on Mic. vii. 14.

^b A peasant's rough way of expressing the capture and slavery of ladies, as of cows being treated like wild animals, led by the nose with a ring (2 Kings xix. 28 ; Job xli. 2), and of fish caught with a hook.

^c A new figure. Captives are driven through the breaches of the city 'as a herd of cows go one after another through a gap in a fence'. (Driver.)

^d This is a very uncertain word which occurs nowhere else. Armon is, however, a fairly common word for 'a palace' or 'citadel'; hence A.V. rendering. It is possible that Harmon is a corruption of the very similar Charmon, and may mean that they would be *devoted* for licentious rites to the goddess Istar.

^e Go on with your unspiritual worship and your immoral life ! See notes on v. 5, and on Hos. viii. 11.

Drought. iv. 7, 8.

- 7 And I also have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered.
- 8 So two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water, and were not satisfied:

Yet have ye not returned unto me,
Saith the LORD.

Blasted crops. iv. 9.

- 9 I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: the multitude of your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees hath the palmerworm devoured:

Yet have ye not returned unto me,
Saith the LORD.

Pestilence and sword. iv. 10.

- 10 I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword,¹ and have carried away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camp to come up even into your nostrils:

¹ Heb. with the captivity of your horses.

Yet have ye not returned unto me,
Saith the LORD.

Earthquake. iv. 11.

- 11 I have overthrown^a some among you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a brand plucked out of the burning:

Yet have ye not returned unto me,
Saith the LORD.

(3) *THEREFORE THE GREAT AND MIGHTY GOD MUST STILL PUNISH, AND ISRAEL MUST MEET HIM.* iv. 12, 13.

- 2 Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

- 3 For, lo, he that formeth the mountains,
And createth the wind,
And declareth unto man what is his thought,
That maketh the morning darkness,
And treadeth upon the high places of the earth.
The LORD, the God of hosts, is his name.

^a See note on i. 1.

III. A SOLEMN DIRGE OVER THE MIGHTY SINS OF ISRAEL AND THEIR APPROACHING CALAMITY. v. 1-17.

Mourning for the nation's death. v. 1-3.

Hear ye this word which I take up for a lamentation **5**
over you, O house of Israel.

The virgin of Israel is fallen ; **2**

She shall no more rise :

¹ Or, *lieth forsaken*

She ¹ is cast down upon her land ;

There is none to raise her up.

For thus saith the Lord God : **3**

The city that went forth a thousand

Shall have an hundred left,

And that which went forth an hundred

Shall have ten left,

To the house of Israel.

An exhortation to seek the LORD, but not by the vain worship which He abhors and which is doomed. v. 4-7.

For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, **4**

Seek ye me, and ye shall live :

But seek not Beth-el, **5**

Nor enter into Gilgal,

And pass not to Beer-sheba :

For Gilgal shall surely go into captivity,

And Beth-el shall ² come to nought ^a.

⁺ ² Or, *become vanity*
(Heb. *Aven*)

Seek the LORD, and ye shall live ; **6**

Lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph,

And it devour and there be none to quench it
in Beth-el :

Ye who turn judgement to wormwood, **7**

And cast down righteousness to the earth ;

For God is very greatly to be feared. v. 8, 9.

Seek him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, **8**

And turneth ³ the shadow of death into the morn-
ing,

And maketh the day dark with night ;

That calleth for the waters of the sea,

⁺ ³ Or, *deep darkness*

^a In the word *yigleh*, go into captivity, there is a play on the word Gilgal ; so also with Beth-el (the house of God), and Beth-aven (the house of vanity, generally of idolatry, here = nothingness). Cf. Hos. iv. 15 ; v. 8 ; x. 5 ; and Amos i. 5. Beth-el, Gilgal, and Beer-sheba were their chief sanctuaries.

And poureth them out upon the face of the earth^a;

The LORD is his name ;

9 That ¹bringeth sudden destruction upon the ¹Or, causeth
strong, destruction
to flash
forth
So that destruction cometh upon the fortress.

*The injustice and oppression of the rich must cease if
Israel is to obtain a reprieve. v. 10-15.*

0 They hate him that reproveth in the gate^b,
And they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.

1 Forasmuch therefore as ye trample upon the poor,
And take exactions from him of wheat :

Ye have built houses of hewn stone,

But ye shall not dwell in them ;

Ye have planted pleasant vineyards,

But ye shall not drink the wine thereof.

2 For I know how manifold are your transgressions

And how mighty are your sins ;

Ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe,

And that turn aside the needy in the gate^c *from
their right.*

3 Therefore he that is prudent shall keep silence in such
a time ; for it is an evil time^d.

4 Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live : and so the
LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye say.

5 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judge-
ment in the gate : it may be that the LORD, the God
of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

*Alas ! Israel's obduracy will cause universal
mourning. v. 16, 17.*

6 Therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts,
the Lord :

Wailing shall be in all the broad ways ;

And they shall say in all the streets, Alas ! alas !

And they shall call the husbandman to mourning, ² Heb. *And*
² And such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing. *proclaim*

7 And in all vineyards shall be wailing :

For I will pass through the midst of thee,

Saith the LORD.

*wailing to
such as are
skilful of
lamenta-
tion.*

^a See note on ix. 6.

^b Either the judge (see note on Isa. xxix. 21) or a prophet (perhaps Amos
himself) preaching to people who gathered there. See Intro. p. 2 ; Jer. xvii.
; and note on ver. 12.

^c The gate of a city was the ordinary place for the transaction of business,
the administration of justice, and for the audience of kings.

^d People think it inadvisable because perilous to speak out concerning such evils.

IV. A DENUNCIATION OF HYPOCRISY AND FORMAL WORSHIP. v. 18-27.

'Jehovah's Day' they desire will be fraught with peril and unexpected disaster. v. 18-20.

Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD^a! 18
Wherefore would ye have the day of the LORD?

It is darkness, and not light.

As if a man did flee from a lion, 19
And a bear met him;

¹ Or, *And*

¹ Or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall,

And a serpent bit him.

Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and 20
not light?

Even very dark, and no brightness in it?

The mockery of worship without the moral life.

v. 21-24.

I hate, I despise your feasts^b, 21
And I² will take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

Yea, though ye offer me³ your burnt offerings²²
and meal offerings, I will not accept them:

Neither will I regard the⁴ peace offerings of your fat beasts.

Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; 23
For I will not hear the melody of thy viols^c.

But let judgement roll down as waters, 24
And righteousness as a⁵ mighty stream.

Ceremonialism but secondary, and when perverted to idolatry must bring exile. v. 25-27.

Did ye^d bring unto me sacrifices and⁶ offerings in the 25
wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? Yea, ye 26
⁷ have borne⁸ Siccuth your king and⁹ Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to your-

†² Heb. will not smell a savour.

³ Or, burnt offerings with your meal offerings

⁴ Or, thank offerings

†⁵ Or, ever-flowing

†⁶ Or, meal offerings

†⁷ Or, shall take up...

And I will cause &c.

⁸ Or, the tabernacle

of your king

Some ancient versions have,

the tabernacle of Moloch.

⁹ Or, the shrine of your images

^a This is the earliest mention of the Day of Jehovah. In the popular mind it is the day in which God manifests Himself in victory to deliver Israel. Amos here says that God's righteousness will be vindicated against sin, and so, instead of a day of triumph, it would prove a day of disaster. People would seek refuge from one danger only to run into another.

^b Cf. Isa. i. 11-15.

^c Cf. vi. 5.

^d According to the text this would refer to idolatrous practices in the wilderness, and would shew that idolatry had characterised the nation throughout its history. The margin would seem to imply 'Did I exact a punctilious discharge of ceremonial in your wanderings in the desert? No. But you and your idols (cf. Jer. xlviii. 7; xlix. 3; Isa. xlvi. 1, 2) shall submit to similar exile wanderings.'

27 selves^a. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus,
Saith the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts.

V. ANOTHER REBUKE OF ISRAEL'S LEADING MEN, WHOSE BLIND SELF-INDULGENCE WILL BE PUNISHED BY CAPTIVITY AND OTHER HORRORS OF WAR.
vi. 1-14.

Israel has no more reason to escape than other nations. vi. 1, 2.

6 Woe to them that are at ease in Zion,
And to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria,
The notable men of the chief of the nations,
To whom the house of Israel come!
2 Pass ye unto Calneh, and see;
And from thence go ye to Hamath the great^b:
Then go down to Gath of the Philistines^c:
Be they better than these kingdoms?
Or is their border greater than your border^d?

Nevertheless, regardless of coming evil, they give themselves over to selfish luxury. vi. 3-6.

3 Ye that put far away the evil day^e,
And cause the¹ seat of violence to come near; ¹ Or, *sitting*
4 That lie upon beds of ivory,
And stretch themselves upon their couches,
And eat the lambs out of the flock,
And the calves out of the midst of the stall;

^a Sakkuth is the ideographic value for the planet Saturn, and was invoked with Kaiwanu, which is the Assyrian name of the same planetary deity, who was credited with malignant influences. As the Israelites of Amos's day were not chargeable with the worship of Assyrian gods, it is probable that verse 26 is a later addition.

^b Calneh is probably the Calno whose then recent conquest is alluded to in Isa. x. 9, and may be Kulnai, mentioned, along with Arpad and Hadrach in Assyrian tribute lists, as belonging to Syria. Hamath was the capital of a kingdom of the same name in the same district. It had been defeated with Syria and Israel at the battle of Karkar, 854 B.C.

^c This would seem to imply that Gath (see note on i. 8) had recently been severely treated by an invading foe.

^d Probably we should read, 'Are ye better than these kingdoms? or is your region greater than theirs?' i.e. these places have already succumbed to the common enemy, how can Israel hope to escape? See *Encycl. Bibl.*, i. 150.

^e 'They put from them the judgement of God (ii. 6-8), that they may exercise violence over His creatures.' (Pusey.)

That sing idle songs to the sound of the viol ; 5
That devise for themselves instruments of music,

¹ Or, *like David's*

¹ like David ;

² Heb. *in bowls of wine.*

That drink ² wine in bowls, 6

And anoint themselves with the chief ointments ;
But they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

*They must suffer all the horrors of siege, captivity,
and plague. vi. 7-11.*

Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that 7
go captive, and the revelry of them that stretched
themselves shall pass away.

The Lord GOD hath sworn by himself, 8

Saith the LORD, the God of hosts :

³ Or, *pride*

I abhor the ³ excellency of Jacob, and hate his
palaces :

Therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is
therein.

And it shall come to pass ^a, if there remain ten men 9
in one house, that they shall die. And when a man's 10

⁴ Or, *kins-man*

⁴ uncle shall take him up, even he that burneth him,
to bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say
unto him that is in the innermost parts of the house,
Is there yet any with thee ? and he shall say, No ;
then shall he say, Hold thy peace ; for we may not
make mention of the name of the LORD.

For, behold, the LORD commandeth, 11

⁵ Or, *he will smite the great house*

And ⁵ the great house shall be smitten with
breaches,

And the little house with clefts.

*The absurdity of supposing that their boasted strength
can avert the consequences of their wrong-doing.
vi. 12-14.*

Shall horses run upon the rock ? 12

Will one plow *there* with oxen ?

⁶ See Deut. xxix. 18.

That ye have turned judgement into ⁶ gall,
And the fruit of righteousness into worm-
wood ^b :

^a Plague has entirely carried off one large family. In another house there is only one survivor who is found in an innermost room by the relative who searches the house for corpses to cremate (because of the plague). In superstitious terror he will not allow him to speak, lest he should utter the dread name of God, and so perhaps invoke some fresh calamity.

^b The perversion of justice into the poison and bitterness of gall and wormwood (i. e. acts of violence and oppression) is as great a perversion of things as setting horses to gallop and oxen to plough upon a rock.

- 13 Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say,
Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength ^a?
14 For, behold, I will raise up against you a nation ^b, O
house of Israel, saith the LORD, the God of hosts;
and they shall afflict you from the ¹entering in of ¹ See
Hamath unto the brook of the Arabah ^c. ² Kings xiv
25.

Part III.

JEHOVAH'S JUDGEMENTS, EVEN THOUGH THEY
MAY BE AVERTED BY PRAYER, ARE OTHER-
WISE INEVITABLE, BUT WILL BE FOLLOWED BY
A RESTORATION OF ISRAEL. vii—ix.

I. FOUR PROPHETIC PICTURES LEADING UP TO A DECLARATION OF IMPENDING DOOM. vii—viii. 3.

- (1) *THE DEVOURING LOCUSTS, AVERTED BY
THE PROPHET'S PRAYER.* vii. 1-3.

7 Thus the Lord God shewed me :

And, behold, he formed locusts in the beginning of
the shooting up of the latter growth ; and, lo, it was
the latter growth after the king's mowings ^d.

- 2 And it came to pass that when they made an end of
eating the grass of the land, then I said,
O Lord God, forgive, I beseech thee
How shall Jacob stand?
For he is small.

3 The LORD repented concerning this :
It shall not be, saith the LORD.

- (2) *THE RAGING FIRE, AGAIN AVERTED BY
THE PROPHET'S PRAYER.* vii. 4-6.

4 Thus the Lord God shewed me :

And, behold, the Lord God called to contend ^e by
fire ; and it devoured the great deep, and would have
5 eaten up the ²land. Then said I,

² Heb.
portion.

^a The Israelites were boasting of the recent capture of Lodabhar ('Nought')
and Karnaim ('Horns'), in Gilead, as a great military feat. See *Encycl. Bibl.*,
i. 149. ^b Probably Assyria.

^c From Lebanon, or Coele-Syria (see note on i. 5), on the extreme north, to
the brook that flows into the Dead Sea on the extreme south.

^d Probably 'a tribute in kind levied by the kings of Israel on the spring
herbage, as provender for their cavalry. Cf. 1 Kings xviii. 5.' (W. R.
Smith.) After this had been paid, the locusts devoured what the owners
expected to cut for themselves.

^e Cf. Isa. iii. 13; Jer. ii. 9; Hos. iv. 1; Mic. vi. 2. In the hot countries of
the East conflagrations in field and forest are of frequent occurrence.

O Lord God, cease, I beseech thee :
How shall Jacob stand ?
For he is small.

The LORD repented concerning this : 6
This also shall not be, saith the Lord God.

(3) *THE MEASURING PLUMBLINE, SHEWING THE THOROUGHNESS WITH WHICH GOD WOULD DO THE WORK OF DESTRUCTION.* vii. 7-9.

Thus he shewed me :

1 Or, upon And, behold, the Lord stood ¹ beside a wall made 7
by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand. And 8
the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou ?
And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord,
Behold, I will set a plumbline ^a in the midst of
my people Israel ;
I will not again pass by them any more :
And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, 9
And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid
waste ;
And I will rise against the house of Jeroboam
with the sword.

An incident to which the last prophecy gave rise ^b.
vii. 10-17.

Then Amaziah the priest of Beth-el sent to Jeroboam ¹⁰
king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against
thee in the midst of the house of Israel : the land is
not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos saith, ¹¹
Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall
surely be led away captive out of his land. Also ¹²
Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee
away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread ^c,
and prophesy there : but prophesy not again any more ¹³
at Beth-el : for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is
a royal house. Then answered Amos, and said to ¹⁴
Amaziah, I ² was no prophet, neither ² was I ³ a
prophet's son ; but I ² was an herdman ^d, and a dresser

² Or, am

³ Or, one
of the sons
of the pro-
phets See
1 Kings xx.
35.

^a It is not easy to see the exact point of the simile. It may either mean that Jehovah would test the iniquity of the people with a plumbline and punish accordingly, or that He would set about the demolition of the sanctuaries in the same methodical way that a man sets about building. The same simile is applied in this sense in Isa. xxxiv. 11 ; 2 Kings xxi. 13 ; and probably in Isa. xxviii. 17.

^b See General Introduction, p. xi.

^c i.e. receive support as a professional prophet. Cf. 2 Kings xxiii. 9.

^d See note on i. 1.

15 of sycamore trees^a: and the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

16 Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD:

Thou sayest, Prophecy not against Israel,

And drop not *thy word* against the house of Isaac;

17 Therefore thus saith the LORD:

Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city,

And thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword,

And thy land shall be divided by line;

And thou thyself shalt die in a land that is unclean,

And Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land.

(4) *THE BASKET OF FRUIT, SHEWING
ISRAEL'S END.* viii. 1-3.

8 Thus the Lord God shewed me:

2 And behold, a basket of summer fruit. And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit^b. Then said the LORD unto me,

The end is come upon my people Israel;

I will not again pass by them any more.

3 And the songs of the¹ temple shall be howlings¹ Or, *palace*
in that day,

Saith the Lord God:

The dead bodies shall be many;

In every place² shall they cast them forth with² Or, *have
they cast
them forth
be silent*

II. A DENUNCIATION OF THE AVARICIOUS.

viii. 4-14.

Their cruelty, impiety, and fraud. viii. 4-6.

4 Hear this, O ye that would swallow up the needy,
And cause the poor of the land to fail, saying,

5 When will the new moon be gone, that we may
sell corn?

And the sabbath, that we may³ set forth wheat?³ Heb. *open*.

Making the ephah small, and the shekel great^c,

^a The fruit of the sycamore is said by Theophrastus and Pliny to have been punctured, apparently to improve its flavour. Hasselquist, a Swedish traveller (eighteenth century), says the wood was cut to make the tree bear. Such may have been part of the occupation of Amos. See note on i. 1.

^b Amos says, A basket of *Kaitz* (summer fruit); and the reply is *Ketz* (the end) is come upon Israel.

^c i.e. getting as much money as they could out of the poor. The new moon and the sabbath were the most ancient, or at any rate the most generally observed feasts. Cf. 2 Kings iv. 23.

¹ See
ch. ii. 6.

And dealing falsely with balances of deceit ;
That we may buy the poor for ^a silver, 6
And the needy for a pair of shoes ^a,
And sell the refuse of the wheat.

Their certain and terrible curse in terms of physical calamity—earthquake, eclipse, religious famine, and drought. viii. 7-14.

The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, 7
Surely I will never forget any of their works.
Shall not the land tremble for this, 8
And every one mourn that dwelleth therein?
Yea, it shall rise up wholly like the River ^b ;
And it shall be troubled and sink again, like
the River of Egypt ^c.
And it shall come to pass in that day, 9
Saith the Lord God,
That I will cause the sun to go down at noon ^d,
And I will darken the earth in the clear day.
And I will turn your feasts into mourning, 10
And all your songs into lamentation ;
And I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins,
And baldness upon every head ;
And I will make it as the mourning for an
only son,
And the end thereof as a bitter day.
Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, 11
That I will send a famine in the land,
Not a famine of bread,
Nor a thirst for water,
But of hearing the words of the LORD.
And they shall wander from sea to sea, 12
And from the north even to the east ;
They shall run to and fro to seek the word of
the LORD,
And shall not find it.

In that day shall the fair virgins and the young men 13
faint for thirst.

They that swear by the sin of Samaria ^e, 14

^a See note on ii. 7.

^b i.e. the Nile.

^c Just as in Egypt the Nile rises and sinks, so an earthquake will rid Palestine of its guilty people.

^d There was a solar eclipse, visible in Palestine, on June 15, 763 B.C., at 11.15 a.m. It is mentioned in the Assyrian annals, and has been confirmed by modern astronomers. See Introd. p. 1.

^e Most probably the calf at Beth-el (see Hos. viii. 5, 6 ; x. 5). Idolatrous oaths are here of course meant. Arabs swear to-day by 'the way to Mecca'.

And say, As thy God, O Dan, liveth ;
 And, As the ¹ way of Beer-sheba liveth ;
 Even they shall fall, and never rise up again.

¹ Or,
manner

III. A VISION FORETELLING A GREAT EARTHQUAKE FROM WHICH NONE WOULD FINALLY ESCAPE. ix. 1-6.

■ I saw the Lord standing ² beside the altar : and he said, ² Or, *upon*
 Smite the chapiters ³, that the thresholds may shake :
 And break them in pieces on the head of all of them ;
 And I will slay the last of them with the sword :

³ There shall not one of them flee away,
 And there shall not one of them escape.

³ Or, *He that*
fleeeth of
them shall
not flee
away, And
he that
escapeth of
them shall
not be
delivered
⁴ Heb. *Sheol*.

2 Though they dig into ⁴ hell,
 Thence shall mine hand take them ;
 And though they climb up to heaven,
 Thence will I bring them down.

3 And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel,

I will search and take them out thence ;
 And though they be hid from my sight in the bottom
 of the sea,
 Thence will I command the serpent, and he shall
 bite them.

4 And though they go into captivity before their
 enemies,
 Thence will I command the sword, and it shall
 slay them :

And I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and
 not for good.

5 For the Lord, the GOD of hosts,
 Is he that toucheth the land and it melteth,
 And all that dwell therein shall mourn ;
 And it shall rise up wholly like the River ^b ;
 And shall sink again, like the River of Egypt ^c ;

6 It is he that buildeth his chambers in the heaven,
 And hath founded his vault upon the earth ;
 He that calleth for the waters of the sea ^d
 And poureth them out upon the face of the
 earth ;

The LORD is his name.

^a The capitals of the pillars. The picture is that of worshippers in a temple being destroyed by its sudden collapse.

^b i. e. the Nile.

^c See note on viii. 8.

^d He overwhelms the land with a seismic wave ; or perhaps it refers to the ordinary tides as a proof of God's power in nature.

IV. ISRAEL SHALL BE TREATED AS OTHER NATIONS: A REMNANT ONLY, THE TRUE GRAIN, WILL BE SAVED. ix. 7-10.

Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, 7
O children of Israel? saith the LORD.

Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of
Egypt,

And the Philistines from Caphtor,

And the Syrians from Kir^a?

Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the 8
sinful kingdom,

And I will destroy it from off the face of the earth;
Saying that I will not utterly destroy the house of
Jacob,

Saith the LORD.

† ¹ Heb.
*cause to
move to
and fro.*

For, lo, I will command, and I will ¹ sift the house of 9
Israel among all the nations, like as *corn* is sifted in
a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the
earth. All the sinners of my people shall die by the 10
sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor
prevent us.

V. THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL. ix. 11-15.

In that day

Will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is 11
fallen,

And close up the breaches thereof;

And I will raise up his ruins,

And I will build it as in the days of old;

That they may possess the remnant of Edom, 12

² Or, *were* And all the nations, which ² are called by my name^b,

Saith the LORD that doeth this.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, 13

That the plowman shall overtake the reaper,

And the treader of grapes him that soweth seed^c;

^a The prophet here argues that God had directed the migrations of other nations as well as that of Israel from Egypt (see Introd. p. 2). As Israel is a 'sinful kingdom' it must perish like other sinful kingdoms, except that a remnant will be saved.

Caphtor (see Gen. x. 14; Deut. ii. 23) is probably Crete (cf. Jer. xlvii. 4), which, as recent archaeology has shewn, was a centre of culture in prehistoric times. For Kir, see note on i. 5.

^b Those nations which had been conquered in the time of David. Cf. 2 Sam. xii. 28.

^c Cf. Lev. xxvi. 5. The growth and ripening will be so rapid that there will be no interval in the work of cultivation. A hyperbole to describe the fertility of the land.

And the mountains shall drop sweet wine,
And all the hills shall melt ^a.

- 14 And I will bring again the captivity of my people
Israel,
And they shall build the waste cities,
And inhabit them;
And they shall plant vineyards,
And drink the wine thereof;
They shall also make gardens,
And eat the fruit of them.
- 15 And I will plant them upon their land,
And they shall no more be plucked up out of their
land which I have given them,
Saith the LORD thy God.

^a There will be streams of fertility flowing down the mountain-side. Cf. Joel iii. 18.

HOSEA

INTRODUCTION

HOSEA, or rather Hoshea, who shares his name with Joshua (Num. xiii. 16; Deut. xxxii. 44) and Israel's last king, has been well called 'the prophet of Israel's decline and fall' (Cheyne); for he lived in the latest and darkest period of the Northern Kingdom, and proclaimed its immediate and irretrievable ruin. He addresses the people sometimes under the title of Samaria, their capital, but more frequently under that of Ephraim, the most distinguished of the ten tribes. A native of Israel, he reveals a much more intimate knowledge of the country (iv. 2, 15; v. 1; vi. 8, 9; vii. 11; viii. 4; x. 5, 14; xii. 1, &c.) than his contemporary Amos, the 'herdman' of Judah, who also prophesied in the Northern Kingdom. Though Hosea's prophecy was mainly directed against Israel, allusions to Judah, especially as sharing Israel's sins and having to expect Israel's punishment, are scattered throughout the book (see, for instance, iv. 15; v. 10, 14; vi. 4; viii. 14; xi. 12; xii. 2). His ministry appears to have commenced in the latter part of Jeroboam II's reign (which closed 743 B.C.), and, as no mention is made of Tiglath-Pileser's expedition against Pekah in 734 (2 Kings xv. 29), probably lasted at any rate till the accession of this king (735)¹. For a short time the strong hand of Jeroboam II² had arrested the national decay. But no sooner was this vigorous king dead than the nation broke out in civil broils and a general anarchy, in which the ordinary obligations of law and social conduct, and the higher claims of religion were alike disregarded. The frequent substitution of Baal for Jehovah, and the perhaps even more general worship of Jehovah with heathenish ceremonies; the cruel and licentious rites; the outrages in which princes and priests perhaps took a prominent part³; the regicidal strife which brought about the successive assassination of four kings; above all, the hostility to all prophetic remonstrance, shewed how absolutely incurable was the deeply rooted disease.

Whether Hosea lived to see the fall of Samaria and the captivity of the ten tribes is uncertain. There is certainly no distinct reference in the book to these events as having already taken place. There is indeed a possible allusion in x. 7, 15 to the capture and imprisonment of Hoshea the king (725 B.C., 2 Kings xviii. 9). But,

¹ See note on i. 1. ² See Introduction to Amos, p. 1. ³ See note on vi. 9.

as we learn from an inscription of Sargon the usurping successor of Shalmaneser, the capture of the city and the deportation of the tribes was only effected by himself three years later (722 B.C., 2 Kings xvii. 3-6).

In ch. i—iii, after a fashion difficult for the modern mind to appreciate, but not uncommon among the prophets¹, Hosea makes a beautiful symbolical use of the sad events of his own domestic experience. In early life he had married a woman who proved to be of bad character². She bore him a son and a daughter³, but was constantly unfaithful to her husband, in spite of all his efforts to reclaim her. At length, unable otherwise to keep her from her evil ways, having first redeemed her from a paramour, he requires her for a long time to remain under gentle restraint, and as unmarried. All this is allegorised by Hosea. Israel has been constantly unfaithful to her husband Jehovah, having committed adultery with other gods. Jehovah, having in vain attempted to win back her love, will punish her with an exile in which she will by gentle force be restrained for a while from all religious worship; after that she will return to her first love. Hosea, as Isaiah with his sons (Isa. vii. 3, 14; viii. 3), gives Gomer's children symbolical names, as a sign of God's dealings with Israel.

But it is in the prophet's feelings even more than in the facts that the point of the simile lies. If he could love a faithless wife so tenderly and patiently, what must be the love of Jehovah towards His people? Of the exquisite tenderness of feeling and stern moral earnestness of the prophet we have a most beautiful example in vi. 4-6. It will be remembered that the words 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice', which occur in this passage, were used by Christ as expressive of the very essence of Christianity.

Of all the prophetic writings, not one is so difficult as this book. The difficulty lies largely in the style. It is terse, abrupt, full of mixed metaphors, obscure allusions, grammatical anomalies, aggravated no doubt, in many cases, by a corruption of the text, to which they naturally give rise. But the difficulty is also largely increased by the prophet's temperament. 'The words of upbraiding, of judgement, of woe, burst out one by one, slowly, heavily, condensed, abrupt, from the prophet's heavy and shrinking soul' (Pusey). But in spite of all this the sense of God's love is ever stronger than the sense of His wrath, and the true key to Hosea's meaning often lies in realising the abruptness with which his feelings succeed each other, like the storms and sunshine of an April day⁴. But it is with the sunshine of Divine love that this beautiful book ends.

¹ See Jer. iii. 8, 9; Ezek. xvi; xxiii. 37, &c. ² See notes on i. 2.

³ See note on i. 9 for the third child.

⁴ We have a very striking example of this in ch. xi.

HOSEA

The Superscription^a. i. 1.

THE word of the LORD that came unto Hosea the son¹ of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

Part I. i. 2—iii.

In or near 743 B.C., during the reign of Jeroboam II.

GOD'S LOVE TO UNFAITHFUL ISRAEL ILLUSTRATED
BY THE PROPHET'S AFFECTION FOR AN UN-
FAITHFUL WIFE.

1. A LESSON FROM A LIFE'S TRAGEDY.

i. 2—ii. 1.

I. ISRAEL'S BACKSLIDING REPRESENTED BY THE ADULTEROUS WIFE. i. 2-9.

(1) *HOSEA'S MARRIAGE, SIGNIFYING GOD'S
MERCY.* i. 2.

¹ Or, *with* When the LORD spake at the first¹ by Hosea, the 2
LORD said unto Hosea^b,
Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredom^c
And children of whoredom :
For the land doth commit great whoredom,
Departing from the LORD.

(2) *GOMER'S OFFSPRING, SIGNIFYING GOD'S
JUDGEMENT.* i. 3-9.

'God will scatter'—Jezreel. i. 3-5.

So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim ; 3
and she conceived, and bare him a son. And the 4
LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel ;

For yet a little while,

² Heb. *visit*. And I will ²avenge the blood of Jezreel upon
the house of Jehu^d,

^a An editorial note giving a much wider scope for Hosea's prophetic activity than is borne out by the contents of his prophecy. Cf. Mic. i. 1.

^b This probably means that Hosea *only afterwards* realised that his love for Gomer was a Divinely directed impulse. Cf. Jer. xxxii. 6-8.

^c Of unchaste disposition which did not necessarily shew itself till after marriage.

^d In evident allusion to the massacres of Jehu in 2 Kings ix, x, which the prophet sees in a different light, and a truer, than the editor of the Kings. Cf. 2 Kings x. 30.

And will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease.

- 5 And it shall come to pass at that day,
That I will break the bow of Israel in the valley
of Jezreel ^a.

'Unpitied'—Lo-ruhamah. i. 6, 7.

- 6 And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And
the LORD said unto him, Call her name ¹ Lo-ruhamah : ¹ That is,
For I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel,
That hath not obtained mercy.

That I should in any wise pardon them.

- 7 But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah,
And will save them by the LORD their God,
And will not save them by bow, nor by sword,
Nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen ^b.

'Not my people'—Lo-ammi. i. 8, 9.

- 8 Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she con-
9 ceived, and bare a son. And *the LORD* said, Call
his name ² Lo-ammi :

For ye are not my people ^c,
And I will not be ³ your *God*.

² That is,
Not my people.

³ Heb.
for you.

II. YET THE JUDGEMENT IS TO BE RE- VERSED AT A DISTANT AGE.

i. 10—ii. 1 ^d.

- 10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as ^[Ch. ii. 1 in Heb.]
the sand of the sea,

Which cannot be measured nor numbered ;

- And it shall come to pass that, ⁴ in the place where ⁴ Or, *in-*
it was said unto them, *stead of that*
which was

Ye are not my people,

It shall be said unto them,

Ye are the sons of the living God.

N.B. An obelus (†) attached to a marginal note shews that the alternative rendering or reading is preferred, or calls attention to some other important point.

^a The Plain of Esdraelon, the classic battlefield of Israel (Judges v. 19 ; vii ; 1 Sam. xxxi ; 2 Kings xxiii. 30 ; Rev. xvi. 14, 16).

^b Ver. 7 is generally recognised as a later insertion with reference to the deliverance from Sennacherib (701 B.C.), and is clearly out of place here.

^c Hosea probably doubted the paternity of this child.

^d This paragraph, sandwiched as it appears to be between the judgements of this chapter and the next, is regarded by many commentators as a later insertion by an exilic or post-exilic editor. Others place it after ii. 23, and point out that this agrees with St. Paul's quotation in Rom. ix. 25, 26. But such sudden transitions from threatening to promise are at any rate quite in keeping with Hosea's manner. See Introduction, p. 25.

And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together,
 And they shall appoint themselves one head,
 And shall go up from the land :
 For great shall be the day of Jezreel ^a.
 Say ye unto your brethren, ¹ Ammi ;
 And to your sisters, ² Ruhamah.

¹ That is,
My people.

² That is,
*That hath
 obtained
 mercy.*

2. FIRST DISCOURSE. ii. 2-23.

A COMMENTARY ON HIS WIFE'S CONDUCT AND
 THE NAMES OF THE CHILDREN.

I. A SEVERE JUDGEMENT THREATENED.

ii. 2-13.

*A warning to Israel because of her faithlessness towards
 her Divine Husband.* ii. 2-5.

Plead with your mother, plead ^b ;
 For she is not my wife,
 Neither am I her husband :
 And let her put away her whoredoms from her
 face,
 And her adulteries from between her breasts ;
 Lest I strip her naked,
 And set her as in the day that she was born,
 And make her as a wilderness,
 And set her like a dry land,
 And slay her with thirst ;
 Yea, upon her children will I have no mercy ;
 For they be children of whoredom.
 For their mother hath played the harlot :
 She that conceived them hath done shamefully :
 For she said, I will go after my lovers ^c,
 That give me my bread and my water,
 My wool and my flax,
 Mine oil and my ³ drink.

³ Heb.
drinks.

The discipline of siege, famine, and poverty. ii. 6-13.

^d Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, 6
 And I will make a fence against her,

^a 'Day' i.e. of prosperity, just as 'God's day' is the day of His power.

^b Generally taken as addressed to the sons of Gomer, but as Hosea has chiefly in mind the *application* of his life-story it may be rather an appeal from God to Hosea and his possible associates to dissuade Israel from her idolatry. For this way of appealing to the prophets generally, see notes on Isa. viii. 12, 19.

^c The nation attributed her material prosperity to her gods.

^d In the troubles of a siege the nation, seeking in vain for help from her false gods, would turn to seek help from Jehovah. The difficulty of this passage and its solution lies in the fact that Hosea combines ideas which belong to the parable and to its application.

That she shall not find her paths.
 And she shall follow after her lovers,
 But she shall not overtake them;
 And she shall seek them,
 But shall not find them:
 Then shall she say, I will go and return to my
 first husband;

For then was it better with me than now.
 For she did not know that I gave her the corn,
 and the wine, and the oil,
 And multiplied unto her silver and gold,
 Which they ¹ used for Baal.

Therefore will I ² take back my corn in the time
 thereof,

And my wine in the season thereof,
 And will pluck away my wool and my flax
 Which should have covered her nakedness.

And now will I discover her ³ lewdness in the
 sight of her lovers ^a,

And none shall deliver her out of mine hand.

I will also cause all her mirth to cease,
 Her feasts, her new moons, and her sabbaths,
 And all her ⁴ solemn assemblies.

And I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees,
 Whereof she hath said, These are my hire that my
 lovers have given me ^b:

And I will make them a forest,
 And the beasts of the field shall eat them.

And I will visit upon her the days of the Baalim ^c,

⁵ Unto which she burned incense;
 When she decked herself with her ⁶ earrings and
 her jewels,

And went after her lovers,

And forgot me, saith the LORD.

¹ Or, made
 into the
 image of
 Baal†

² Or,
 return, and
 take away

⁴ Or,
 appointed
 feasts†

⁵ Or,
 Wherein
 she burned
 incense to
 them

⁶ Or, nose-
 rings†

II. A MESSIANIC PROMISE OF BRIGHT AND GLORIOUS DAYS FOR GOD'S PEOPLE.

ii. 14-23.

A second Exodus. ii. 14, 15.

Therefore, behold, I will allure her,

^a Her lovers are disgusted with her, meaning that her gods refuse to help her. This is, of course, only Hosea's way of putting it. He had already suggested their impotence. It was Jehovah who could both give and withdraw wealth.

^b She thought that her gods had given her these things as a reward for their worship. Cf. ver. 5.

^c Baal (lord) was applied to any god or image. The reference here is to religious festivals attended in gala dresses. See ver. 16.

¹ Heb. *to her heart.*

² That is, *Troubling.*
See Josh. vii. 26.

³ Or, *sing*

And bring her into the wilderness,
And speak ¹ comfortably unto her.
And I will give her her vineyards from thence, 15
And the valley of ² Achor for a door of hope ^a :
And she shall ³ make answer there ^b,
As in the days of her youth,
And as in the day when she came up out of
the land of Egypt.

Heathenish worship done away with. ii. 16, 17.

† ⁴ That is,
My husband.

⁵ That is,
My master.

⁶ Or,
remembered

And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, 16
That thou shalt call me ⁴ Ishi ^c;
And shalt call me no more ⁵ Baali.
For I will take away the names of the Baalim out 17
of her mouth,
And they shall no more be ⁶ mentioned by their
name.

Security from the ravages of beast and man. ii. 18.

And in that day will I make a covenant for them 18
With the beasts of the field,
And with the fowls of heaven,
And with the creeping things of the ground :
And I will break the bow and the sword and the
battle out of the land,
And will make them to lie down safely.

A second betrothal. ii. 19, 20.

And I will betroth thee unto me for ever ; 19
Yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness,
and in judgement,
And in lovingkindness, and in mercies.
I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness ^d : 20
And thou shalt know the LORD.

^a What was to the Israelites in an early stage of the conquest of Palestine the valley of 'Troubling', their descendants shall find a starting-point for a life of hope.

^b She shall answer her husband Jehovah's endearing call.

^c Both *Ishi* (man) and *Baal* (lord) were used in the sense of husband. The first word was only henceforth to be used of Israel's relation to Jehovah, firstly, because the latter implied subservience, and secondly, because it was used also of heathen gods. The passage has been thought further to imply that hitherto the name Baal had been used of Jehovah as well as of heathen gods. That it was so originally is probable from its use in proper names, such as Ish-baal (man of the Lord), afterwards changed into Ishbosheth (man of shame), when the meaning of Baal was misunderstood.

^d In contrast to the heathenish orgies of ver. 13, the worship of Jehovah implies righteousness, mercy, and faithfulness.

A new sowing of crops and men followed by a rich harvest. ii. 21-23.

21 And it shall come to pass in that day,

^a I will answer, saith the LORD,

I will answer the heavens,

And they shall answer the earth ;

22 And the earth shall answer the corn, and the wine, and the oil ;

And they shall answer ¹ Jezreel.

23 And I will sow her unto me in the ² earth ;

And I will have mercy upon ³ her that had not obtained mercy ;

And I will say to ⁴ them which were not my people, Thou art my people ;

And they shall say, *Thou art my God* ^b.

¹ That is, Whom God soweth.

² Or, land

³ Heb. Lo-ruhamah.†

⁴ Heb.

Lo-ammi. See ch. i. 6, 9, 10.†

3. SECOND DISCOURSE. iii.

THE CONTINUATION OF THE PARABLE OF HOSEA'S FAMILY-LIFE, REPRESENTING THE WONDROUS LOVE OF GOD.

God's love for Israel in spite of her idolatry. iii. 1.

3 And the LORD said unto me, Go yet, love a woman ^c beloved ⁵ of her friend and an adulteress, even as the LORD loveth the children of Israel, though they turn unto other gods, and ⁶ love cakes of raisins ^d.

⁵ Or, of her husband, yet an &c.

⁶ Or, them that love

Gomer, redeemed by her husband, is condemned for a while to a purifying chastisement of seclusion. iii. 2-4.

2 So I bought her to me for fifteen *pieces* of silver ^e, and an homer of barley, and an ⁷ half homer of barley :

⁷ Heb. lethech.

^a Jezreel longs for the corn, which looks to the earth to produce it, the earth to the rain from heaven, the heaven to Jehovah ; but Jehovah answers before the prayer is uttered. He sends the rain which fertilises the earth, which brings forth for Israel's use. Israel is here called Jezreel for the sake of a second play on the word. Once more God would 'scatter', but not as in i. 4, by causing them to flee before their enemies, but by sowing a new crop of men as well as the rich crops of the land.

^b Thus the former threat conveyed in all three names is reversed.

^c The reference is still to Gomer. But it is not quite clear whether the friend refers to the paramour or to Hosea, as in marg. Hosea's love for Gomer, even when separated from her, was like the love which God continued to feel for Israel.

^d The margin describes their gods as delighting in such offerings ; a contrast to Jehovah who delights in justice and mercy. See ii. 19. The text means that the Israelites, who love raisin cakes, delight in sacrificial feasts in honour of the gods, the supposed givers of raisins.

^e Gomer appears to have become the voluntary slave-concubine of her paramour, and Hosea has to redeem her for a sum in money and kind amounting together to about the usual value of a slave, which was thirty shekels. See Exod. xxi. 32.

and I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many 3 days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be any man's wife:

So will I also be toward thee. For the children of 4 Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without ¹pillar, and without ephod or teraphim ^a:

The return of Israel under Jehovah and their Messiah.
iii. 5.

Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek 5 the LORD their God, and David ^b their king; and shall come with fear unto the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

Part II. iv—xiii.

PROPHECIES DEALING WITH THE MISERABLE
REIGNS OF ZECHARIAH, SHALLUM, MENAHEM,
AND PEKAHIAH. Before 734 B.C.

I. THE TERRIBLE CORRUPTION OF THE NATION. iv.

Moral disorder brings dire but well-deserved distress.
iv. 1-4.

Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: 4
For the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land,
Because there is no truth, nor mercy,
Nor knowledge of God in the land.
There is nought but swearing and breaking faith, 2
And killing, and stealing, and committing adultery;
They break out, and blood toucheth blood ^c.
Therefore shall the land mourn, 3
And every one that dwelleth therein shall languish,
With the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven;
Yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.

^a Israel deprived in captivity of proper government and of all symbols of worship is compared to Gomer deprived of conjugal rights. The pillar or obelisk beside the altar (see note on Isa. xix. 19) and the teraphim or household gods (see 1 Sam. xix. 13) were originally common characteristics of all Semitic worship. The ephod here probably denoted a divining image, cf. Judg. viii. 27; 1 Sam. xiv. 18 (R.V. marg.); xxiii. 6, 9; xxx. 7. It was not intended to condemn them here specifically, though Hosea attached the chief importance to the spiritual and moral side of religion. It is clear, too, that he contemplated a restoration of some outward form of worship when the discipline was over.

^b This became a common title for the Messiah, cf. Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23.

^c So frequent is murder that the stains of bloodshed touch each other. For a similar hyperbole, cf. Isa. xxviii. 8.

- 4 Yet let no man strive,
Neither let any man reprove ;
For thy people are as they that strive with the
priest ^a.

The profligacy of the religious leaders and the profanation of their office would involve the punishment of priests and people alike. iv. 5-11.

- 5 And thou shalt stumble in the day ^b,
And the prophet also shall stumble with thee in the
night ;

And I will destroy thy mother ^c.

- 6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge :

^d Because thou hast rejected knowledge,

¹ I will also reject thee,

That thou shalt be no priest to me :

Seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God ^e,

I also will forget thy children ^f.

¹ According
to another
reading,
*I have
rejected.*

- 7 As they were multiplied, so they sinned against me :

I will change their glory into shame.

- 8 ^g They feed on the sin of my people,

And set their heart on their iniquity.

- 9 And it shall be, like people, like priest ^h :

And I will punish them for their ways,

And will reward them their doings.

- 10 ⁱ And they shall eat, and not have enough ;

They shall commit whoredom, and shall not in-
crease :

Because they have left off to take heed to the
LORD.

- 11 Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the

² understanding.

² Heb. *heart*.

^a Let no man blame God for these things, they are the natural consequences of their doings. For ' they that strive with the priest. And thou ' we should probably read ' they that strive with ME. O priest, thou '. In any case the last word is addressed to the priest, as in ver. 6.

^b The priest is to stumble because he has abused his office.

^c The nation ; but probably the text is corrupt.

^d The priests are here charged with ignorance, covetousness, gluttony, and debauchery.

^e i. e. God's teaching. The accredited teachers of the nation do not themselves know God's revelation (law). See ch. viii. 12.

^f i. e. the members of the priestly caste who in the next verse are referred to in the third person.

^g They encourage people in sin for the sake of their perquisites in sin-offerings.

^h The priests are no better than the people, and they will meet with the same punishment.

ⁱ The abuse of divinely-given instincts makes them unsatisfying and useless.

A ghastly picture of an immoral worship and its consequences^a. iv. 12-14.

My people ask counsel at their stock,
And their staff declareth unto them^b:
For the spirit of whoredom hath caused them to err,
And they have gone a whoring from under their
God.

They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains,
And burn incense upon the hills,

Under oaks and poplars and terebinths,

Because the shadow thereof is good^c:

Therefore^d your daughters commit whoredom,

And your¹ brides commit adultery.

¹ Or, daughters in law

I will not punish your daughters when they commit
whoredom,

Nor your¹ brides when they commit adultery;

For they themselves go apart with whores,

² See Deut. xxiii. 17.

And they sacrifice with the² harlots^e:

And the people that doth not understand shall be
overthrown.

Their doom should be a warning to Judah^h. iv. 15.

Though thou, Israel, play the harlot,

³ Or, become guilty

Yet let not Judah³ offend;

And come not ye unto Gilgal^f,

Neither go ye up to Beth-aven^g,

Nor swear, As the LORD liveth^h.

The result of Israel's obstinacy, idolatry, and shameless sins. iv. 16-19.

For Israel hath behaved himself stubbornly, like
a stubborn heifer:

^a 'The two sins of idolatry and sensual-licence were closely intertwined. . . . It would be hardly too much to say that every harlot in Israel was probably a votary of the goddess Astarte.' Plumptre, *Lazarus, &c.*, p. 209. See note on Amos ii. 7.

^b Stock, i.e. any kind of wooden idol. Staff, i.e. probably the diviner's wand. How absurd that a lump of wood should give them sound advice!

^c For worship on hills and under sacred trees, cf. Isa. i. 29, 30; lvii. 5-7; Jer. ii. 20.

^d No wonder that worship should take the form of whoredom, when idolatry itself is nothing less.

^e They cannot in justice expect their daughters and wives to be any better than themselves. The disgraceful acts of these are part of their own punishment. See note on Amos ii. 7.

^f i.e. 'the house of vanity', a contemptuous name for Beth-el, 'house of God', given to it because of the calf-worship. See x. 5.

^h Cf. Amos v. 5. Wellhausen thinks a third place-name has been dropped. 'Nor take their oath at Beersheba' (the well of the oath). See Gen. xxvi. 25-31 and note on Hos. v. 6.

Now will the LORD feed them as a lamb in a large ¹ place ^a.

17 Ephraim is joined to idols;

Let him alone.

18 ¹ Their drink is become sour:

They commit whoredom continually ^b;

² Her ³ rulers ^c dearly love shame.

19 The wind hath wrapped her ^d up in its ⁴ wings;

And ⁵ they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

¹ Or, *Their carouse is over*†

² Or, *They are given up to love; her rulers are a shame*

³ Heb, *shields*.†

⁴ Or, *skirts*

⁵ Or, as otherwise read, *their altars shall be put to shame*

II. THE SINS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH WILL RECEIVE THEIR WELL-MERITED REWARD. v—vi. 11a.

Priests, rulers, and people are all condemned. v. 1-7.

6 Hear this, O ye priests,
And hearken, ye house of Israel,
And give ear, O house of the king,
For ⁶ unto you pertaineth the judgement;
For ye have been a snare at Mizpah,
And a net spread upon Tabor ^e.

⁶ Or, *against you is the judgement*

2 And the revolvers are gone deep ⁷ in making ⁷ slaughter ^f;

⁷ Or, *in corruption*

But I am ⁸ a rebuker of them all.

⁸ Heb. *a rebuke*.

3 I know Ephraim,

And Israel is not hid from me:

For now, O Ephraim, thou hast committed whoredom,
Israel is defiled.

4 ⁹ Their doings will not suffer them to turn unto ⁹ their God:

⁹ Or, *They will not frame their doings*

For the spirit of whoredom is ¹⁰ within them,

And they know not the LORD.

¹⁰ Or, *in the midst of*†

^a Or, 'Now would Jehovah.' Instead of being docile as a lamb under His protecting care, they are like an obstinate heifer going their own way. Cheyne, following Ewald and Hitzig, takes the passage as an incredulous exclamation, How should the LORD feed, &c. ! See Ps. xviii. 19; xxxi. 8; cxviii. 5; Isa. xxx. 23.

^b Probably a common custom at their sacrificial feasts; when their carousal is over they indulge in lewdness.

^c Those to whom they might look for their protection.

^d The perfect is that of prophetic certitude. An enemy (Assyria) would carry them off as a tempest, and they would find how useless all their sacrifices had been. Cf. Isa. i. 29. But the reading is uncertain.

^e Mizpah and Tabor are probably here referred to as sanctuaries, which were frequent on mountain-tops. Mizpah was noted as a sanctuary of Jehovah in early times: see Gen. xxxi. 46-52; Judges xx. 1.

^f Or, with a slight alteration of the text, 'They have made a deep pit (i. e. a pitfall) in Shittim.' So Wellhausen.

¹ Or,
excellency

And the ¹ pride of Israel doth testify to his face ^a: 5
Therefore Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in
their iniquity;

Judah also shall stumble with them.

^b They shall go with their flocks and with their ⁶
herds to seek the LORD;

But they shall not find him:

He hath withdrawn himself from them.

They have dealt treacherously against the LORD; 7

For they have ² borne strange children ^c:

Now shall ³ the new moon devour them with their
⁴ fields.

[†] ² Or,
begotten

³ Or,
a month

⁴ Heb.
portions.

*The punishment that would burst upon Israel and
Judah for their sins. v. 8-12.*

^d Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, 8

And the trumpet in Ramah:

Sound an alarm at Beth-aven;

⁵ Or,
After thee,
Benjamin!
See Judg. v.
14.

^e Behind thee, O Benjamin ^e.

Ephraim shall become a desolation in the day of ⁹
rebuke:

Among the tribes of Israel have I made known that
which shall surely be.

The princes of Judah are like them that remove ¹⁰
the landmark ^f:

I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.

Ephraim is oppressed, he is crushed in judgement ^g; ¹¹

Because he was content to walk after ⁶ the command ^h.

[†] ⁶ The Sept.
and Syriac
have, vanity.

⁷ Therefore am I unto Ephraim as a moth, ¹²

⁷ Or, And
I was

And to the house of Judah as rottenness.

*Assyrian help is vain against the power of Almighty
God. v. 13, 14.*

When Ephraim saw his sickness, ¹³

And Judah *saw* his wound,

^a Very obscure; it may mean that their pride brings its own refutation. Cf. vii. 10.

^b This implies that the worship of Jehovah was mixed up with that of the Canaanitish idols. He was to them merely one of many gods, like them in the character assigned to Him and in the rites with which they worshipped Him.

^c Carrying out the comparison of idolatry to adultery. Their very worship of Jehovah is adultery in the prophet's sense of the word.

^d The tribes are poetically advised to arouse themselves, though resistance will prove useless. Cf. Joel ii. 1.

^e The war-cry of Benjamin (cf. Judges v. 14); here a summons to war.

^f In its most literal sense a dangerous temptation among a nation of small landowners; here more generally of obtaining land by unrighteous means. Cf. Isa. v. 8.

^g The metaphor is that of a defeated party to a lawsuit.

^h Probably the marginal reading is correct: the text is meaningless.

Then went Ephraim to Assyria,
And sent to ¹ king Jareb ^a :
But he is not able to heal you,
Neither shall he cure you of your wound.

¹ Or, a king
that should
contend

- 14 For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion,
And as a young lion to the house of Judah :
I, even I, will tear and go away ;
I will carry off, and there shall be none to
deliver.

God will wait for tribulation to work repentance. v. 15.

- 15 I will go and return to my place,
Till they ² acknowledge their offence, and seek my face : ³ Or, have
In their affliction they will seek me ³ earnestly. borne their
guilt

*Israel under God's chastening hand turns earnestly, but
in vain, to God. vi. 1-3.* ³ Or,
earnestly,
saying,†

- 6 ^b Come, and let us return unto the LORD :
For he hath torn, and he will heal us ;
He hath smitten, and he will bind us up.
2 After two days ^c will he revive us :
On the third day he will raise us up,
And we shall live before him.
3 And let us know, let us follow on to know the LORD ;
His going forth is sure as the morning :
And he shall come unto us as the rain,
As the latter rain that watereth the earth.

*But repentance must be deep and lasting, a moral
revolution, not merely an acknowledgement of God,
or a desire for His benefits. vi. 4-6 ^d.*

- 4 O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee ?
O Judah, what shall I do unto thee ?
For your ⁴ goodness is as a morning cloud,
And as the dew that goeth early away.
5 Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets ^e ;
I have slain them by the words of my mouth :
⁵ And thy judgements are as the light that goeth
forth ^f.

⁴ Or,
kindness
⁵ According
to some
ancient ver-
sions, And
my judge-
ment goeth
forth as the
light.

^a A nickname for the Assyrian king, meaning probably one who might contend in judgement as an advocate, carrying out the metaphor of ver. 11.

^b The people exhort each other to repent.

^c i. e. very soon.

^d See Introduction, p. 25.

^e By a poetical figure the prophets are frequently said to carry out the sentence which they predict. Cf. Jer. v. 14.

^f Almost a repetition of the penitent's words, but with a moral and spiritual interpretation. Even God's punishments are a revelation of the beauty of holiness.

¹ Or,
kindness

For I desire ¹ mercy, and not sacrifice ; 6
And the knowledge of God more than burnt
offerings ².

*Examples of the universal disorder, shewing Israel's
hopeless defilement, which has affected Judah as well.*

vi. 7-11 a.

² Or, are as
men that
have trans-
gressed a
covenant

³ Or, men

⁴ Or, And
as robbers
lying in
wait, so &c.

But they ² like ³ Adam ^b have transgressed the 7
covenant :

There have they dealt treacherously against me.

Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity, 8

It is stained with blood.

⁴ And as troops of robbers wait for a man, 9

So the company of priests murder in the way to-
ward Shechem :

Yea, they have committed lewdness ^c.

In the house of Israel I have seen an horrible 10
thing :

There whoredom is *found* in Ephraim,

Israel is defiled.

Also, O Judah, there is an harvest appointed for 11
thee ^d.

III. SOWING THE WIND: REAPING THE WHIRLWIND. vi. 11 b—viii.

Every effort to heal only discloses more violent corruption.

vi. 11 b—vii. 2.

^e When I bring again the captivity of my people, 7
When I would heal Israel,
Then is the iniquity of Ephraim discovered,
And the wickedness of Samaria ;

^a Hosea here again takes the words of the penitents out of their mouths. Their idea of knowing God (ver. 3) was at best an acknowledgement of His power to punish or to do them good. With Hosea it meant a knowledge of His true character. The first half of the verse is that quoted by our Lord. Matt. ix. 13; xii. 7.

^b Probably we should read with Wellhausen 'in Adam', perhaps the town of that name in Joshua iii. 16.

^c Hosea certainly appears to charge the priests directly with violent robbery and murder as well as gross immorality. But it may mean that they instigated or at least encouraged such crimes for the sake of professional gain. See iv. 8. Shechem, like Mizpah, was an ancient sanctuary of Jehovah. Josh. xxiv. 1.

^d One of the many parenthetical allusions to Judah, here perhaps justified by v. 8-14. The first part of ver. 11 seems to refer to Judah's punishment. Judah, too, would be gathered into captivity. The last part of the verse is possibly a later editorial comment (giving a different turn, a promise of prosperity) on the first half; or it should be taken, as here, with vii. 1.

^e See previous note. Translate 'When I would bring again'.

For they commit falsehood :
 And the thief entereth in,
 And the troop of robbers ¹ spoileth without.
 2 And they consider not in their hearts
 That I remember all their wickedness :
 Now have their own doings beset them about ^a ;
 They are before my face.

¹ Or, *maketh*
a raid

Evil passions lead to ghastly king-murder. vii. 3-7.

3 They make the king ^b glad with their wickedness,
 And the princes with their lies ^c.

4 They are all adulterers ;
 They are as an oven heated by the baker ;
 He ceaseth to stir *the fire*,
 From the kneading of the dough until it be
 leavened ^d.

5 On the day ^e of our king the princes ² made ³ them-
 selves sick with the heat of wine ;

² According
 to many
 ancient
 versions,
*began to be
 heated with
 wine.*

6 For they have ⁴ made ready their heart like an
 oven,

³ Or, *him* +
⁴ Heb.
*brought
 near.*

Whiles they lie in wait :
⁵ Their baker sleepeth all the night ;
 In the morning it burneth as a flaming fire.

⁵ According
 to some
 ancient
 versions,
*Their
 anger.*

7 They are all hot as an oven,
 And devour their judges ;
 All their kings are fallen ^f :

There is none among them that calleth unto me.

The evils of coquetting with foreign powers. vii. 8-12.

8 Ephraim, he mixeth himself among the peoples ;

^a Their own doings are their adversaries, for they bring about their punishment.

^b 'King and princes,' making the statement more general ; but Hosea, though describing general tendencies, has, perhaps, as is generally supposed, the murder of Zechariah especially in mind. As, however, the details here given are hardly consistent with the words 'before the people' (2 Kings xv. 10), he may be referring to the earlier murder of Elah by Zimri (1 Kings xvi. 9, 10) as a type of the way in which Samaria treated its kings.

^c lies = flattery.

^d The passion of lust is combined with the passion of anger, which, like a heated oven, once fired with wine, works out its deadly purpose, and like the leaven, increases in strength unperceived.

^e Some festal day, perhaps the king's birthday. The assassins take this occasion to make the king drunk, flattering him meanwhile to ward off suspicion, and murder him in his drunken slumber. All this, Hosea insists, is the natural outcome of heated passion.

^f Here again the statement is made general. It is the character of the people's passion and irreligion, rather than its consequences, on which Hosea wishes to insist.

Ephraim is a cake not turned ^a.

Strangers have devoured his strength,

9

And he knoweth *it* not :

¹ Heb.
sprinkled.

Yea, gray hairs are ¹ here and there upon him ^b,

And he knoweth *it* not.

² Or,
excellency

And the ² pride of Israel doth testify to his face ^c : 10

Yet they have not returned unto the LORD their
God,

Nor sought him, for all this.

And Ephraim is like a silly dove ^d, without 11

³ Heb.
heart.

³ understanding :

They call unto Egypt,

They go to Assyria.

When they shall go, I will spread my net upon 12
them ;

⁴ Or, *When
the report
cometh to
their con-
gregation*

I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven :

I will chastise them,

⁴ As their congregation hath heard ^e.

*This reliance on foreigners means want of faith in
Jehovah, and an unwillingness to conform to His
will^f. vii. 13-16.*

Woe unto them !

13

For they have wandered from me ;

Destruction unto them !

For they have trespassed against me :

Though I would redeem them,

Yet they have spoken lies against me.

And they have not cried unto me with their heart, 14

But they howl upon their beds :

^a The policy of alliance, where the ruling powers were at deadly feud, was necessarily one-sided. Friendship with one involved the deadly enmity of the others. Even from the power courted the result was weakness, not strength.

^b Dependence on a foreign power was a sign of national decrepitude.

^c See note on v. 5. Here again the meaning is very doubtful. In any case they did not realise their need nor repent of their irreligious folly.

^d Ready to court every mate in turn.

^e i.e. 'In the manner I have publicly proclaimed in Israel.' G. A. Smith, p. 275. But the meaning is very doubtful and the text probably corrupt.

^f It is not very clear whether this paragraph is merely intended to describe idolatrous practices or the worship of Jehovah in a heathen manner and in a heathen spirit. If the latter, it gains immensely in force and subtlety. It seems to answer some sort of objection on the part of the people as this: 'We have given Jehovah His due, and yet He has been unable to save us.' To this Hosea replies, 'This is a downright lie. God has not saved you because your prayers were like the howling of a sick man in pain. You wanted merely to get all you could out of God, the corn and the wine which He had withheld from you (see ii. 9), but understand that it was God's hand that was chastising you, and that what He asked for was repentance. Your turning was no true return to God in His greatness, but only a crying out for help.'

¹ They assemble themselves for corn and wine,
They rebel against me.

15 Though I have ²taught and strengthened their
arms,

Yet do they imagine mischief against me.

16 They return, but not to *him that is* on high ;

They are like a deceitful bow ^a :

Their princes shall fall by the sword

For the rage of their tongue :

This shall be their derision in the land of
Egypt ^b.

¹ According
to some
ancient
authorities,
*They cut
themselves.*

² Or,
*chastened
them*

*Sound the trumpet of judgement: Israel's despairing
cry at the approach of the enemy. viii. 1-3.*

8 ³ Set the trumpet to thy mouth ^c.

As an eagle *he cometh* against the house of the

LORD ^d :

Because they have transgressed my covenant,

And trespassed against my law.

2 They shall cry unto me,

My God, we Israel know thee ^e.

3 Israel hath cast off that which is good :

The enemy shall pursue him.

³ Or, *The
trumpet to
thy mouth !
As an eagle
against the
house of the
LORD !†*

*Man-made kings and man-made gods are useless in
their trouble. viii. 4-8.*

4 They have set up kings ^f,

But not by me ;

⁴ They have made princes,

And I knew it not ^g :

Of their silver and their gold have they made
them idols,

That they may be cut off.

⁴ Or, *They
have re-
moved them*

^a A bow that does not shoot straight, and cannot be trusted.

^b They would receive mockery and contempt in the country of those whose alliance they sought. Hosea was uncertain which of the two powers was to be the instrument of punishment, but was at first inclined to look for it especially in Egypt. See viii. 13 ; ix. 3, 6.

^c Addressed by God to the prophet.

^d Summon the enemy to destroy. Be as an eagle against Jehovah's temple. This again shews that Jehovah was still worshipped. But perhaps we should render, 'As an eagle Jehovah cometh up against the House.' In either case the reference is probably to Beth-el.

^e In their trouble they appeal to Jehovah, they claim His patronage as His devotees, as His beloved Israel. But Israel has rejected good. The claim therefore is absurd. She has only the name of Israel, not the character.

^f An allusion to the constant change of dynasty.

^g 'Knew not' is practically equivalent to 'appointed not'. Cf. Gen. xviii. 19; and see note on Amos iii. 2.

He hath cast off thy calf, O Samaria ^a; 5
 Mine anger is kindled against them :
 How long will it be ere they attain to innocency ?
 For from Israel is even this ^b; 6
 The workman made it,
 And it is no God :
 Yea, the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces.

For they sow the wind ^c, 7
 And they shall reap the whirlwind :
¹ He hath no standing corn ;
 The blade shall yield no meal ;
 If so be it yield,
 Strangers shall swallow it up.
 Israel is swallowed up : 8
 Now are they among the nations ^d
 As a vessel wherein is no pleasure.

¹ Or, *It hath
no stalk*

THE SINS WHICH HAD SPECIALLY PROVOKED
 GOD'S PUNISHMENT. viii. 9-14.

I. *Coquetting with foreign powers.* viii. 9-10.

For they are gone up to Assyria, 9
Like a wild ass alone by himself ^e :
 Ephraim hath hired ² lovers.
 Yea, though they hire among the nations, 10
 Now will I gather them ;
 And they ³ begin to be minished
 By reason of the burden of the ⁴ king of
 princes ^f.

² Heb. *loves*.

³ Or, as
otherwise
read, *shall
sorrow a
little
or, for a
little while*

⁴ See Is. x. 8.
Many
ancient
authorities
have, *king
and princes*.

2. *Multiplication of altars.* viii. 11.

Because Ephraim hath multiplied altars to sin, 11
 Altars have been unto him to sin ^g.

^a As they cast off good (ver. 3), so would what they have chosen in its place be cast off. The allusion is probably to the calf at Beth-el, Samaria being put for the whole people. See x. 5.

^b i.e. the calf.

^c ver. 7, 8. A hypothetical climax. Cf. ix. 11-13, 16. (1) They sow nothing: they reap what is far worse than nothing—utter destruction. (2) If any seed comes up from the sowing it does not grow up into standing corn. (3) If there is any standing corn it yields only empty husks. (4) If the husks do yield it will be devoured by the enemy. In other words, an invading foe would destroy all that a famine might possibly have left.

^d This is left quite general. It mattered very little to Hosea who the nations among which they should be in exile were to be.

^e The wild ass seeking a mate is here an emblem of independence, obstinacy, and passion.

^f They would feel the burden of foreign tribute. See 2 Kings xv. 19, 20; but the passage is very obscure.

^g Being carried out in a wrong spirit, this multiplication of sanctuaries led to greater sin. There may be a special reference to immoral rites.

3. *A refusal to obey God's teaching.* viii. 12.

- 12 ¹ Though I write for him my law in ten thousand ¹ Or, *I wrote for him the ten thousand things of my law, but they &c.*
precepts,
 They are counted as a strange thing ^a.

4. *Worship of Jehovah carried out in an unworthy spirit.* viii. 13.

- 13 As for the sacrifices of mine offerings,
 They sacrifice flesh and eat it ^b ;
 But the LORD accepteth them not :
 Now will he remember their iniquity,
 And visit their sins ;
 They shall return to Egypt.

5. *Their trust in their fortifications, which would prove a false security.* viii. 14.

- 14 For Israel hath forgotten his Maker ^c, and
 builded ² palaces ; ² Or, *temples*
 And Judah hath multiplied fenced cities :
 But I will send a fire upon his cities,
 And it shall devour the ³ castles thereof ^d. ³ Or, *palaces*

IV. A VINTAGE (?) DIRGE ^e. ix.

Under Divine chastisement they would no longer be able to keep the feasts they had so much abused. ix. 1-7a.

- 9 Rejoice not, O Israel, ⁴ for joy, like the peoples ; ⁴ Or, *unto exultation*
⁵ For thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, ⁵ Or, *That*
 Thou hast loved hire ^f upon every cornfloor.

- 2 The threshing-floor and the winepress shall not feed them,

And the new wine shall fail her.

- 3 They shall not dwell in the LORD's land ;
 But Ephraim shall return to Egypt,
 And they shall eat unclean food in Assyria.

- 4 ^g They shall not pour out wine *offerings* to the LORD,

^a This is hypothetical. It does not imply that God's teaching (Torah, the word afterwards used of the written law of God) was necessarily written at this time. See note on iv. 6.

^b They sacrifice only for the sake of feasting. ^c Cf. Isa. xxii. 9-11.

^d These two lines are common to Hosea and his contemporary Amos. Cf. Amos i. 4, 7, &c.

^e The allusions in ver. 2-5 suggest the probability that this prophecy was uttered at the time of vintage, or as some think, of harvest.

^f The corn given, as they thought, by the gods in return for worship. Cf. ii. 5, &c. God, the real giver, would deprive them of both corn and wine. Instead they would have only the scanty food of exiles (see note on vii. 16), and have no more sacrificial feasts.

^g ver. 4, 5. They would have no wine and no bread beyond what was necessary for their food. Therefore they could offer neither in sacrifice. If

†¹ Or,
Neither
shall their
sacrifices be
pleasing
unto him :
Their bread
shall be unto
them &c.

¹ Neither shall they be pleasing unto him :
Their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of
mourners ;
All that eat thereof shall be polluted :
For their bread shall be for their appetite ;
It shall not come into the house of the LORD.
What will ye do in the day of solemn assembly, 5
And in the day of the feast of the LORD ?
For, lo, they are gone away from destruction ^a, 6
Yet Egypt shall gather them ^b up,
Memphis ^c shall bury them :
Their pleasant things of silver,
Nettles shall possess them :
Thorns shall be in their tents ^d.
The days of visitation are come, 7
The days of recompence are come ;
Israel shall know it :

*Hosea driven almost mad by the corruption and the
hindrance to his prophetic work. ix. 7 b, 8.*

The prophet is a fool,
The man that hath the spirit is mad,
For the multitude of thine iniquity,
And because the enmity is great.
Ephraim ^e ² was a watchman with my God : 8
As for the prophet, a fowler's snare is in all his
ways,
And enmity in the house of his God.

² Or,
watcheth
against

*Israel's deep corruption, from the first, had disappointed
Jehovah's eager hope. ix. 9, 10.*

They have deeply corrupted themselves, 9
As in the days of Gibeah ^f :
He will remember their iniquity,
He will visit their sins.
I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness ; 10

they could, God would not accept their offering. Moreover, their frequent mourning meals would disqualify them ceremonially for a sacrificial feast. When the time of sacrificial feasts came, they would not be there to keep them because they would be gone into exile.

^a The text is almost certainly corrupt. Wellhausen conjectures 'to Assyria' instead of 'from destruction'.

^b 'gather them', like the vintage, i.e. to destruction. Cf. Rev. xiv. 19, 20.

^c See note on Isa. xix. 13.

^d Their houses in Palestine, with all their treasures, would become waste ruins.

^e No satisfactory explanation has been given of the first clause in ver. 8. The text is very probably corrupt.

^f See Judges xix.

I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at
her first season ^a:

But they came to Baal-peor,

And ¹ consecrated themselves unto the ² shameful ¹ Or,
thing, ^{separated}

And became abominable like that which they ² Heb.
loved ^{shame.} ^b.

Terrible would be their punishment. ix. 11-17.

11 ^c As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a
bird :

There shall be no birth,

And none with child,

And no conception.

12 Though they bring up their children,

Yet will I bereave them,

That there be not a man left :

Yea, woe also to them when I depart from
them ^c!

13 Ephraim, ³ like as I have seen Tyre, is planted ³ Or, as I
in a pleasant place ^d: ^{have seen, is}

But Ephraim shall bring out his children to the ^{like Tyre,}
slayer. ^{that is}
^{planted &c.}

14 ■ Give them, O LORD :

What wilt thou give?

Give them a miscarrying womb

And dry breasts.

15 All their wickedness is in Gilgal ^f;

For there I hated them :

Because of the wickedness of their doings

I will drive them out of mine house :

I will love them no more ;

^a A metaphor from the joyful expectation with which a fruit-grower tastes the first fruit of a young tree. In this case the very first fruit was bitter.

^b Immorality under the guise of religion. See Num. xxv. 3 ff.

^c ver. 11, 12. A hypothetical climax like viii. 7, 8. (1) No children are to be born (this by itself forms a climax: there are to be none of the processes which should end in birth). (2) If they are born they are to die. (3) Even if they grow up, they are to be led out, only to be destroyed by the enemy.

^d The meaning of these words is quite uncertain.

^e This is often explained as a prayer of the prophet on Israel's behalf. Children under these circumstances would be a curse, barrenness a blessing. But it may be that Hosea, in his intense feeling of indignation, prays God to bring about the very evils which he has been foretelling.

^f An ancient sanctuary (the name is perhaps derived from a circle of stones), it had become a seat of heathenish corruption (see iv. 15), though still associated nominally with the worship of Jehovah, as the words 'mine house' shew. See viii. 1.

All their princes are revolvers.
 Ephraim is smitten, 16
 Their root is dried up,
 They shall bear no fruit :
 Yea, though they bring forth,
 Yet will I slay the beloved fruit of their womb.
 My God will cast them away, 17
 Because they did not hearken unto him :
 And they shall be wanderers among the
 nations ^a.

V. 'PUPPET-KINGS AND PUPPET-GODS.'

(G. A. Smith). x.

God's judgement against their altars. x. 1, 2.

Israel is a luxuriant vine, 10
 Which putteth forth his fruit :
 According to the multitude of his fruit
 He hath multiplied his altars ;
 According to the ¹goodness of his land
 They have made goodly ²pillars.
³Their heart is ⁴divided ; 2
 Now shall they be found guilty :
 He shall smite their altars,
 He shall spoil their ²pillars.

¹ Or, prosperity

+ ² Or, obelisks

³ Or, He hath divided their heart

⁴ Or, smooth

Their kings are powerless. x. 3.

Surely now shall they say, 3
 We have no king :
 For we fear not the LORD ;
 And the king, what can he do for us ^b ?

Their covenant means perjury with God ; retribution therefore will spring up like poison. x. 4.

They speak vain words, 4
⁵Swearing falsely in making covenants :
 Therefore judgement ⁶springeth up as ⁷hemlock

In the furrows of the field ^c.

^a Again a hypothetical climax. Cf. viii. 7, 8 and ix. 11, 12. (1) The plant is quite dead. (2) If not dead, it bears no fruit. (3) If it does bear fruit, it is only to be destroyed. (4) If not destroyed, they wander as exiles in a heathen land.

^b Jehovah is not their King, because they did not acknowledge Him in any real sense, and their earthly king was useless to help them.

^c Their covenants are mere words, nothing more. But we have no real key to the historical allusion. Judgement means probably punishment, which is compared to a poisonous weed.

Their gods, an anxiety instead of a help, will drive them to despair. x. 5-8.

- 5 The inhabitants of Samaria shall be in terror for the calves of Beth-aven^a:
For the people thereof shall mourn over it,
And ¹ the priests^b thereof that rejoiced over it,
For the glory thereof, because it is departed from it. ¹ Heb. Chemarim. See 2 Kings xxiii. 5.†
- 6 ^c It also shall be carried unto Assyria for a present to ² king Jareb:
Ephraim shall receive shame,
And Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel. ² See ch. v. 13.†
- 7 ³ As for Samaria, her king is cut off,
As ⁴ foam upon the water. ³ Or, Samaria is cut off with her king ⁴ Or, twigs
- 8 The high places also of Aven^d, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed:
The thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars;
And they shall say to the mountains, Cover us;
And to the hills, Fall on us^e.

Followers of Benjamin's sins, they must expect Benjamin's punishment. x. 9, 10.

- 9 O Israel, thou hast sinned ⁵ from the days of Gibeah^f:
⁶ There they stood;
⁷ That the battle against the children of iniquity should not overtake them in Gibeah. ⁵ Or, more than in the days ⁶ Or, There have they continued ⁷ Or, Shall not the battle... Gibeah?
- 10 When it is my desire, I will chastise them;
And the peoples shall be gathered against them,
When they are ⁸ bound ⁹ to their two transgressions^g. ⁸ Or, yoked ⁹ Or, for

^a See iv. 15; Amos v. 5. Samaria here stands for the Northern Kingdom, not the city.

^b A technical name for the priests of the heathen sanctuaries. See reference in marg.

^c i.e. the calf at Beth-el. Its only value was the precious metal of which it was made. It would prove a convenient object for tribute when Israel was ashamed of seeking its help. See iv. 12. ^d i.e. Beth-aven; see note on iv. 15.

^e Their terror of the enemy drives them to desperation.

^f See Judges xx, and cf. Hos. ix. 9. Hosea here seems to regard Benjamin as belonging to the Northern Kingdom (cf. 1 Kings xi. 32, 36). The house of Saul was in David's time connected with 'Israel' rather than 'Judah'.

^g Because they are bound to their two transgressions; it is generally explained either of the two calves, or of their revolt against God and the House of David (iii. 5). The metaphor is taken from oxen yoked to the plough.

*Ephraim is content with the easier duties of religion,
but must learn its harder discipline.* x. 11.

And Ephraim is an heifer that is taught, 11
That loveth to tread out *the corn*^a;
But I have passed over^b upon her fair neck:
I will set a rider^c on Ephraim;
Judah shall plow,
Jacob shall break his clods.

*God's work means reformation of life and real
religion.* x. 12.

¹ Or, *teach
you right-
eousness*

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, 12
Reap according to mercy;
Break up your fallow ground:
For it is time to seek the LORD,
Till he come and ¹ rain righteousness upon you^d.

*Because they had worked in wickedness, they had reaped
the fruit in iniquity and must bear God's chastise-
ment.* x. 13-15.

² Or, *faith-
lessness*

Ye have plowed wickedness, 13
Ye have reaped iniquity;
Ye have eaten the fruit of ² lies:
For thou didst trust in thy way,
In the multitude of thy mighty men.

³ Or,
against

⁴ Heb.
peoples.

Therefore shall a tumult arise ³ among thy 14
⁴ people,
And all thy fortresses shall be spoiled,
As Shalman^e spoiled Beth-arbel in the day of
battle:

The mother was dashed in pieces with her
children.

+ ⁵ Or, *So
shall it be
done unto
you at
Beth-el*

⁵ So shall Beth-el do unto you because of your 15
great wickedness:
At daybreak shall the king of Israel be utterly
cut off.

^a The prophet for a while becomes more tender. God's punishments are educative, not vindictive.

^b 'Pass over,' i.e. put the yoke upon. The prophetic past tense is here used. Judah is, as often before, included in Hosea's pronouncements.

^c The rider is the enemy who by punishment should lead the nation to repentance.

^d Righteousness is a greater gift of God than the bounty of nature.

^e Generally believed to be the Assyrian king Shalmaneser who made Hoshea tributary (2 Kings xvii. 3, 4); but the event is not otherwise known, and the identification of both place and king is uncertain.

VI. THE HEAVENLY FATHER'S YEARNING LOVE FOR HIS REBELLIOUS SON. xi. 1-11.

Israel's ungrateful return for God's tender paternal care. xi. 1-4.

- 11 When Israel was a child, then I loved him,
And called my son out of Egypt^a.
2 As they^b called them, so they went from them :
They sacrificed unto the Baalim,
And burned incense to graven images.
3 Yet I taught Ephraim to go ;
¹ I took them on my arms^c ;
But they knew not that I healed^d them.
4 I drew them with cords of a man^e,
With bands of love ;
And I was to them as they that take off the yoke
on their jaws,
And I laid meat before them.

¹ Heb. *He took them on his arms.* †

A righteous Father cannot altogether withhold punishment from those bent on backsliding. xi. 5-7.

- 5 He shall not return into the land of Egypt^f ;
But the Assyrian shall be his king,
Because they refused to return.
6 And the sword shall² fall upon his cities,
And shall consume his bars^g, and devour *them*,
Because of their own counsels.
7 And my people are bent to backsliding from me :
Though they call them to *him that is* on high,
None at all will³ exalt *him*^h.

² Or, *rage against*

³ Or, *lift himself up*

^a The prophet is here referring to the Exodus. See General Introduction, p. xx.
^b They—i.e. God's messengers, Moses and the Prophets. 'Them'—though Hosea is still speaking metaphorically, comparing God's treatment of young Israel to a parent teaching an infant child to walk, he has the members of the nation in his mind.

^c Note marg. Here Hosea speaks of God ; in the first clause God Himself speaks.

^d A new metaphor. All the time they were ignorant of God's loving care.

^e A metaphor from ploughing. God drew them with cords, but not as one draws or turns the ploughing ox for his own ends, but rather with the feelings of love which man has for man ; a beautiful description of God's gentle discipline. Even that discipline is not always exercised. As after the day's work the husbandman takes off the yoke, and gives his beast food, so God after a while had removed His punishment, and exercised His love by gifts of prosperity.

^f Contrast ix. 3, &c. Jehovah cannot bear the thought of His great work in rescuing His child out of Egypt being undone. Yet Israel must be punished.

^g Its defences. See note on Amos i. 5.

^h This may mean that though they summon men to the worship of God their praise of Him is unreal. But the words as they stand are very obscure.

God cannot give up His people after all. xi. 8, 9.

How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? 8

How shall I deliver thee, Israel?

How shall I make thee as Admah?

How shall I set thee as Zeboim^a?

Mine heart is turned within me,

My compassions are kindled together.

I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, 9

I will not return to destroy Ephraim:

For I am God, and not man^b;

The Holy One in the midst of thee:

And I will not¹ enter into the city.

†¹ Or, *come
in wrath*

The captives will again return^c. xi. 10, 11.

They shall walk after the LORD, 10

Who shall roar like a lion:

For he shall roar,

And the children shall come trembling from the
west.

They shall come trembling as a bird out of Egypt, 11

And as a dove out of the land of Assyria:

And I will make them to dwell in their houses,

Saith the LORD.

VII. LESSONS DRAWN FROM THE PAST HISTORY AND THE PRESENT CONDUCT OF ISRAEL. xi. 12—xiii.

The infidelity of both kingdoms. xi. 12—xii. 2.

[Ch. xii. 1 in
Heb.]

Ephraim compasseth me about with falsehood, 12

And the house of Israel with deceit:

†² Or, *And
Judah is yet
unstedfast*

² But Judah yet ruleth with God,

And is faithful with the Holy One^d.

^a Two of the five cities of the Plain, which, though not actually mentioned as overthrown in Gen. xix, were traditionally believed to have shared their fate. Cf. Deut. xxix. 23.

^b God shews His Godhead most evidently in mercy. Cf. Ps. cxxx. 4 and the Collect for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity, 'O God, who declarest Thy almighty power most chiefly in shewing mercy and pity.'

^c The prophet's standpoint is again different. He contemplates them as captives in Egypt and Assyria (see vii. 16). God was like a lion (more usually of God's threatened judgements and threatenings, cf. v. 14; Amos iii. 8; here of His summons to follow Him.) Under His guidance they return and once more inhabit their desolate houses. (Contrast ix. 6.) God's voice even in mercy is still terrible, for they cannot forget the past; but they have learnt to submit themselves to His will.

^d The marginal rendering gives the most probable meaning, but involves probably a slight alteration of the Hebrew text. Words of reprobation are clearly required by xii. 2. Judah shared Israel's sins, and therefore must share her punishment.

12 Ephraim feedeth on wind ^a,
 And followeth after the east wind :
 He continually multiplieth lies and desolation ^b ;
 And they make a covenant with Assyria,
 And oil is carried into Egypt ^c.

*with God,
 and with the
 Holy One
 who is
 faithful*

2 The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah,
 And will ¹ punish Jacob ^d according to his ways ; ¹ Heb. *visit upon*.
 According to his doings will he recompense him.

*They have the fault of their ancestor : why not his
 virtues ^e ? xii. 3-6.*

3 In the womb he took his brother by the heel ;
 And in his ² manhood he ³ had power with God : ² Or,
 4 Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed : *strength*
 He wept ^f, and made supplication unto him : ³ Or, *strove*
 He found him at Beth-el, and there he spake with
 us ^g ;

5 ⁴ Even the LORD, the God of hosts ; the LORD is his ⁴ Or, *For the LORD is the God of hosts*
 memorial.

6 Therefore turn thou to thy God :
 Keep mercy and judgement,
 And wait on thy God continually.

Jacob's dishonesty and self-deception. xii. 7, 8.

7 ⁵ *He is ^a a trafficker ^h,* ⁵ Or, *As for Canaan, the*
 The balances of deceit are in his hand : *g.c. †*
 He loveth to ⁷ oppress. ⁶ Or, *a Canaanite*
 8 And Ephraim said, Surely I am become rich, *Heb. Canaan. †*
 I have found me wealth : ⁷ Or, *defraud*
 In all my labours they shall find in me none
 iniquity that were sin.

^a i.e. tries to satisfy herself with a worthless, unedifying religion.

^b i.e. multiplies altars to false gods, and by so doing brings upon himself desolation as a punishment.

^c They court foreign alliances by bribes which are practically tribute.

^d The name Jacob is here used to introduce the references to the patriarchal history.

^e Jacob was a supplanter from the first ; so were they. But in his manhood he turned to God with repentance and earnest prayers. The allusions are to the story of Jacob and Esau's birth (Gen. xxv. 26), Jacob's wrestling with the 'man' (xxxii. 24), and the dream at Beth-el (xxviii. 11-15).

^f Not actually mentioned in Genesis, but added, perhaps unconsciously, to point the moral of repentance. We have a similar addition in Heb. v. 7 with reference to Christ.

^g The patriarch is identified with the nation whom he here symbolically represents.

^h The Canaanites were distinguished as merchants, hence their name. Ephraim had become like them in greed and dishonesty, and yet was quite unconscious of it.

*The ingratitude for God's mercies and providential care
shewn by Israel's defections* ^a. xii. 9-11.

But I am the LORD thy God from the land of
Egypt ;

I will yet again make thee to dwell in tents,
As in the days of the solemn feast.

I have also spoken unto the prophets, 10
And I have multiplied visions ;

¹ Heb. *by
the hand.*

And ¹ by the ministry of the prophets have I used
similitudes ^b.

Is Gilead ^c iniquity ? 11

They are altogether vanity ;

In Gilgal they sacrifice bullocks :

² Or, *shall be*

Yea, their altars ² are as heaps in the furrows of
the field ^d.

*God's providential care illustrated from Jacob's life and
the exodus.* xii. 12-14.

^e And Jacob fled into the field of Aram, 12

And Israel served for a wife,

And for a wife he kept *sheep*.

And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel up out 13
of Egypt,

⁸ Or, *kept*

And by a prophet was he ⁸ preserved.

Ephraim hath provoked to anger most bitterly : 14

Therefore shall his blood be left upon him ^f,

And his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.

*Israel signed her own death-warrant when she adopted
Baal-worship.* xiii. 1-3.

[†] ⁴ Or,
*spake with
trembling
&c.*

⁸ When Ephraim ⁴ spake, there was trembling ; 13

He exalted himself in Israel :

But when he ⁵ offended in Baal,

⁵ Or, *became
guilty*

He died.

And now they sin more and more, 2
And have made them molten images of their silver,

^a Again very tender. 'I have been from the very first and always will be thy God. By the discipline of exile I will draw thee to me, so that it will be like a solemn feast.' The allusion is to the wandering tent-life of the desert. Contrast iii. 4 and similar passages.

^b In reference to the common use of parables, symbols, and the like.

^c Perhaps Ramoth-Gilead, a well-known sanctuary on the east of Jordan and a city of refuge. See Deut. iv. 43.

^d The description may be equally present or future. The chief point is the great number of the altars, looking like heaps of stones in the ploughed fields.

^e See Gen. xxix, xxx.

^f The idea is that of blood-stains as a proof of guilt.

⁸ The allusion seems to be to some definite historical fact ; perhaps the decisive action against Benjamin in Judges xx.

Even idols according to their own understanding,
 All of them the work of the craftsmen :
 They say of them, Let ¹the men that sacrifice ¹Or, the
 kiss the calves ². *sacrificers*
of men †

- 3 Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud,
 And as the dew that passeth early away ^b,
 As the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out
 of the threshing-floor,
 And as the smoke out of the chimney.

*Their folly in not recognising Him who had been from
 the first their only Saviour. xiii. 4-9.*

- 4 Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of
 Egypt ;
 And thou ² shalt know no god but me,
 And beside me there is no saviour ^c. ² Or,
knowest †
- 5 I did know thee in the wilderness,
 In the land of great drought.
- 6 According to their pasture, so were they filled ^d ;
 They were filled, and their heart was exalted :
 Therefore have they forgotten me.

- 7 Therefore am I unto them as a lion :
 As a leopard will I watch by the way :
 8 I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her
 whelps,
 And will rend the caul of their heart :
 And there will I devour them like a lion ;
 The wild beast shall tear them.
- 9 ³ It is thy destruction, O Israel,
⁴ That *thou art* against me, against thy help.

³ Or,
*Thou art
 destroyed,
 O Israel ;
 for thou
 &c. †*

⁴ Or, *For in
 me, in thy
 help—
 Or, But in
 me is thy
 help
 Some
 ancient ver-
 sions have,
 Who shall
 help?*

Their kings were powerless to help^e. xiii. 10, 11.

- 10 Where now is thy king, that he may save thee in all
 thy cities?
 And thy judges,
 Of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?
 11 I have given thee a king in mine anger,
 And have taken him away in my wrath ^e.

^a A common ceremony in heathen worship. The absurdity of sacrificing men in honour of beasts !

^b Proverbial for transitoriness, cf. vi. 4. Here pointing with the other figures to the suddenness of their destruction.

^c They had found nothing in their idols to disprove the primary religious truth revealed in Sinai. See Exod. xx. 2, 3.

^d Like a cow, who eats the more she has to eat. Here of national prosperity.

• Hosea, while referring to the present, is probably still thinking of the past.

But for Israel's unwisdom the coming troubles might be the promise of a new birth. xiii. 12, 13.

The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up ; 12
His sin is laid up in store ^a.

The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come 13
upon him :

He is an unwise son ;

¹ Or, *When it is time, he standeth not in &c.*

¹ For it is time he should not tarry
In the place of the breaking forth of children ^b.

An irrevocable promise of victory over death. xiii. 14.

² Heb. *hand*.

^c I will ransom them from the ² power of ³ the 14
grave ;

³ Heb. *Sheol*.

I will redeem them from death :

⁴ Or, *I will be*

O death, ⁴ where are thy plagues ?

O ³ grave, ⁴ where is thy destruction ?

Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

But first must come the hurricane of divine wrath ^d.
xiii. 15, 16.

Though he be fruitful among his brethren, 15
An east wind shall come,

^e Or, *wind*

The ^f breath of the LORD coming up from the
wilderness,

^g Or, *It*

And his spring shall become dry,

^h Or, *become desolate*

And his fountain shall be dried up :

[Ch. xiv. 1 in Heb.]

ⁱ He shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels.
Samaria shall ^j bear her guilt ; 16

Their desire for a king in Samuel's day was typical of their foolish trust in earthly rulers. God's taking away Saul was typical of the way in which He had constantly disappointed their false hopes. The statement is peculiarly applicable to the Northern Kingdom, with its frequent changes of dynasty.

^a Kept as a treasure to be remembered and punished.

^b A common metaphor for sudden and terrible calamity, which leads, as in Isa. xxvi. 17-19, to the thought (1) of birth, and (2) of resurrection. See note on ver. 14. He is like a child who tarries in the womb and will not be born.

^c Many commentators take these words as interrogative. 'Shall I ransom them, &c.?' explaining the words 'O death', &c., as a summons to death and the grave to do their worst, and giving the word translated 'repentance' the meaning of 'pity'. But the R.V. gives the most natural rendering of the passage. The change of tone exactly accords with Hosea's moods, as in ch. xi; and the word 'repentance', which occurs nowhere else, is the same stem as in the verb 'repented', which is used frequently of God relenting or changing His feeling, as in Jonah iii. 10. Here it means that God would not take back His promise, as in Ps. cx. 4; Num. xxiii. 19. Whether it should be understood as expressive of a definite hope in a future resurrection or as a beautiful figure of the restoration of the people is very uncertain. Cf. Isa. xxvi. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. 1-13.

^d Hosea's tone again changes. But it is quite possible that this was originally a distinct prophecy.

For she hath rebelled against her God :
 They shall fall by the sword ;
 Their infants shall be dashed in pieces,
 And their women with child shall be ripped up.

Part III. xiv.

THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF GOD'S LOVE.

I. JEHOVAH'S NEW COVENANT WITH
 ISRAEL. xiv. 1-8.

A passionate appeal to penitence. xiv. 1, 2.

14 O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God ;
 For thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.
 2 Take with you words^a, and return unto the
 LORD :

Say unto him, Take away all iniquity,

And ¹ accept that which is good :

So will we render ² as bullocks *the offering of our*
 lips^b.

¹ Or,
receive us
graciously

² The Sept.
 and Syriac
 have, *the*
fruit of our
lips.

Israel promises to trust no longer in outward aid of
any kind. xiv. 3.

3 Asshur^c shall not save us ;
 We will not ride upon horses :
 Neither will we say any more to the work of our
 hands,
Ye are our gods :
 For in thee the fatherless findeth mercy^d.

Jehovah assures them of forgiveness. xiv. 4-7.

4 I will heal their backsliding,
 I will love them freely :
 For mine anger is turned away from him.
 5 I will be as the dew unto Israel :
 He shall blossom as the lily,
 And cast forth his roots as Lebanon.
 6 His branches shall spread,
 And his beauty shall be as the olive tree,
 And his smell as Lebanon^e.

^a Words—not an animal sacrifice.

^b lit. 'our lips as calves.' The best offering is the offering of the lips
 springing from the heart.

^c Hosea assumes that Israel has responded to his appeal.

^d God's mercy is a warrant of His greatness. This leads up beautifully to
 God's answer.

^e Especially of the cedars, or perhaps the vine.

They that dwell under his shadow shall return ; 7
 They shall revive *as* the corn,
 And blossom as the vine :

¹ Or, *His memorial*

¹ The scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

Ephraim once more renounces idols. xiv. 8a.

² Or, *O Ephraim, what &c.*

² Ephraim *shall* say, What have I to do any more 8
 with idols ?

Jehovah promises the continuance of His protecting love. xiv. 8b.

I have answered, and will regard him :

Ephraim delights in his renewed good fortune. xiv. 8c.

I am like a green fir tree ;

Jehovah once more reminds him of its true source.
 xiv. 8d.

From me is thy fruit found.

II. SUPPLEMENTARY EXHORTATION ^a.

xiv. 9.

A vindication of God's ways.

Who is wise, and he shall understand these 9
 things ?

Prudent, and he shall know them ?

For the ways of the LORD are right,

And the just shall walk in them ;

But transgressors shall fall therein.

^a Probably this, which reads like an echo from Ps. cvii. 43, is the addition of a later editor.

ISAIAH

INTRODUCTION

BY general consent Isaiah stands first among the Hebrew Prophets, 'the greatest of a race of giants^a.' And yet of his personal history we know but little. He seems to have been engaged, probably as a youth, in keeping the chronicles of his time (2 Chron. xxvi. 22; xxxii. 32). It is not unlikely, and Isa. viii. 16 perhaps implies this, that later he was the head of one of 'the schools' of the prophets. (Cf. Amos vii. 14; 1 Kings xx. 35; 2 Kings ii. 3, &c.; iv. 38; vi. 1.) He himself tells us that he was married (Isa. viii. 3), and had at least two sons, if not a third, to whom he gave symbolical names (Isa. vii. 3; viii. 4; see note on vii. 14).

Jewish tradition, perhaps to account for Isaiah's great influence at court (Isa. vii. 3-17; xxxvii. 2, 21; xxxviii. 1; xxxix. 3-8), makes his father Amoz a brother of king Amaziah, and the prophet therefore a first cousin of Hezekiah. Two very important chronological epochs have their beginning in his time: the Roman, 753 B. C. being the traditional year of the founding of Rome, and the Babylonian, the era of Nabonassar having begun in 747 B. C.^b Isaiah was probably a native of Jerusalem, where all his prophecies were apparently given, and seems to have resided in the lower city (2 Kings xx. 4, R.V.), which lay to the north of the upper city or Zion as it is now, although incorrectly, called. His ministry dates from 740 B. C., the year of king Uzziah's death—his call being connected with a glorious vision of Jehovah (Isa. vi.)—and lasted at least to 701 B. C., the year of Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem.

Isaiah was one of the first four prophets whose writings have come down to us, Amos and Hosea being his immediate predecessors and Micah his contemporary. His book has always occupied the first place among the Prophets in the Old Testament canon. A tradition, to which reference is perhaps made in Heb. xi. 37, says that he was sawn asunder in the trunk of a tree by order of king Manasseh.

^a Renan, *History of the People of Israel*, ii, p. 408, Eng. trans.

^b The date of the first Olympiad (the Grecian chronological epoch), 776 B. C., is just before Isaiah's day. It is also worthy of note that Isaiah lived just about midway between Moses (c. 1200) and Christ.

As with all other prophets, Isaiah's teaching is never out of touch with the events of his time, the social and political circumstances of the age largely determining the nature of the message which he delivers. His prophecies can be assigned, more or less definitely, to five different epochs, as follows:—

(1) The last year of Uzziah, the reign of Jotham, and the two first years of Ahaz (740-734 B.C.)—the period, that is, immediately preceding the first invasion of Palestine by Assyria. When Isaiah began his prophetic mission he found the people, in consequence of the long successful reign of Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 1-15), highly civilised, wealthy, and prosperous, but steeped in social unrighteousness and idolatry, and he steadily and firmly confronted them, king and people alike, with the words of the All-righteous Jehovah, 'the Holy One of Israel,' in accordance with the commission which he had received (vi. 9-13). Not yet the wise and sagacious counsellor of the nation, but a simple preacher of national righteousness and judgement, he plainly sees the collapse of a society so obviously corrupt, and foretells the judgement by an as yet unnamed foe. Ch. ii—vi and ix. 8—x. 4.

(2) The invasion of Tiglath-Pileser III (734-732 B.C.), when a small part of northern Israel was taken captive (2 Kings xv. 29; cf. Isa. ix. 1) and Damascus was taken. The prophecies of this period deal with the crisis occasioned by the Syro-Ephraimitish alliance against Judah (735 B.C., 2 Kings xvi. 5-9; 2 Chron. xxviii. 5-19). Isaiah condemns the overtures of Ahaz to Tiglath-Pileser (2 Kings xvi. 7-9; 2 Chron. xxviii. 16), and foretells the disastrous consequences. To this group belongs the magnificent prophecy of Immanuel, the child whose name was the pledge of Judah's Divine protection. Ch. vii; viii; xvii. 1-11; ix. 1-7, and probably i.

(3) The invasion by Shalmaneser, which resulted in the capture of Samaria by his successor, Sargon, and the deportation of the ten tribes (729-720 B.C., 2 Kings xvii. 3-6; xviii. 9-11). With this period we may connect ch. xxviii, and perhaps xiv. 28-32; xix (see notes).

(4) The Invasion of Palestine, &c., by Sargon, in which Ashdod in Philistia was captured, and the first encounter with and defeat of Egyptian troops by the Assyrians occurred, but which, it is now generally believed, did not directly affect Judah itself (711-710 B.C., Isa. xx. 1). Besides the symbolic prophecy of ch. xx, the events of xxxviii, xxxix belong to this period, and probably chs. xv, xvi, in their present form (see note), and probably also x. 5—xii.

(5) The great invasion of Sennacherib, which commenced after the death of Sargon (being undertaken to put down the rebellion of the Syrian States), and resulted in the destruction of the Assyrian

army and the precipitate return of Sennacherib to Assyria (705-701 B.C., 2 Kings xviii. 13-xix; Isa. xxxvi, xxxvii). To this period may probably be assigned ch. xiv. 24-27; xvii. 12-14; xviii (?); xix; xxii; xxiii; xxix-xxx; xxxii. 1-8 (?); xxxiii; and perhaps also xxxii. 9-20; and possibly x. 5-xii and i.

During all these great crises Isaiah consistently opposed the policy of the Jewish kings to enter into alliances with foreign powers. He knew that the two great world-empires, Assyria and Egypt, were preparing for a coming struggle (Isa. vii. 18), and that each successively sought the alliance of the smaller states which separated them. Isaiah's persistent counsel was to stand aloof from both. 'In quietness and confidence,' in the loving guidance of Jehovah, was to be their strength (xxx. 15). He especially warned the Jews of the folly of relying upon Egypt, whom he contemptuously calls Rahab Sit-still (i.e. 'Braggart, that sitteth still', xxx. 7), and confidently predicted that Zion, in splendid isolation though closely beset and endangered, would yet remain absolutely inviolate. It was thus religion which made Isaiah in a sense a politician. In addition to this it was his special work to denounce the social wrongs and iniquity of his time and to point forward to a glorious future. Amid the general faithlessness and idolatry he never wavered in his loyalty and fidelity to Jehovah, and to the covenant which God had made with Israel.

Besides Isaiah's message to his own people there are several prophecies foretelling the fate of foreign nations with whom the people were directly concerned (see especially ch. xv-xxiii). Also there are parts of i-xxxix^a which were more or less evidently not written by Isaiah. Such are, especially, the doom of Babylon (xiii-xiv. 23); the judgement of the world (xxiv-xxvi, for xxvii see note); the picture of Edom's ruin (xxxiv) and Judah's restoration (xxxv). It is also most probable that xxxvi-xxxix, which would appear to be a later recension of 2 Kings xviii. 13-xix, was by a later hand.

It is evident, from what has been already said, that the book of Isaiah is not arranged throughout either on a chronological plan or according to its subject-matter. And yet it would appear that both these methods have influenced the final arrangement of the book. If we leave out of consideration for a moment ch. xiii-xxvi (xxvii), the whole of the rest falls very nearly into chronological order^b; beginning with the ministerial labours of the prophet

^a Reasons for regarding ch. xl-lxvi as in the main the work of an unknown prophet at the close of the exile, some century and a half later than Isaiah, will be given in vol. iii of this edition.

^b The most important exceptions are that (1) ch. i, a later exhortation, has been placed as a sort of preface to the book, and that (2) perhaps in

in Jotham's reign down to the destruction of Sennacherib's army. This, as far as xxxiii, may well have been compiled by Isaiah very much as we have it now. The section xiii—xxvi (xxvii?) consists of two parts: (1) ch. xiii—xxiii, a collection of 'oracles', comprises prophecies directed against foreign powers, and was originally doubtless a separate work, the 'burden of Babylon' being added at the beginning, at a time when that power was the great national enemy^a. It did not include ch. xiv. 24–32; xx; xxii. 15–25; but it is probable that xxx. 6, 7 (see note) belonged originally to it; (2) ch. xxiv—xxvi (xxvii?), a single prophecy, which must have been added, as a sort of appendix, at a still later date^b, to the book of 'oracles'. The final compilation of the whole book in its present form was probably not earlier than 400 B.C., nor much later than 200 B.C.

Three dominant ideas characterised Isaiah's teaching: (1) His conception of God as the All-righteous 'Holy One of Israel', who demands justice, mercy, and truth in His people, and who will utterly overthrow them if they will not repent of their sin and trust in His power to save. (2) His conception of the Messianic King or Kingdom in which righteousness and peace will bring about the renewal of humanity, both Jew and Gentile, and restore the ultimate harmony of all creation. (3) His hopes in a faithful remnant, whose preservation amid trials and judgements is assured, and who 'as the true Israel within Israel, the holy seed in the fallen stock of the nation, is the object of all his solicitude^c.'

Much has been said, with great truth, of the literary power of Isaiah. As a poetical genius, Dr. Driver^d pronounces him 'superb'. His characteristics, he points out, 'are grandeur and beauty of conception, wealth of imagination, vividness of illustration, compressed energy and splendour of diction.' 'Even in literary form,' writes Prof. Moulton^e, 'the world has produced nothing greater than Isaiah. . . But when we proceed to the matter and thought of Isaiah . . . how can we explain the neglect of such a masterpiece consequence of this, the call of Isaiah, which would naturally have come first, is not given until the sixth chapter. (3) Again, ix. 8—x. 4 clearly belongs to the prophecy of ch. v (see notes); while (4) the historical events of xxxviii—xxxix preceded by some years those of xxxvi—xxxvii.

^a We find similarly in Jeremiah a collection of prophecies (xlv—li) directed against foreign powers, which according to the recension adopted by the LXX is also placed in the middle of the work.

^b Cheyne finds the historical background of these chapters in the events which preceded the disintegration of the Persian empire (350–330 B.C.), see his *Introduction*, p. 155. It is, in fact, now generally accepted that here we have the latest composition of the entire literature of the book of Isaiah. On xxvii, see introductory note.

^c Robertson Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 209.

^d *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 215.

^e *The Modern Reader's Bible*. 'Isaiah,' p. 24.

in our plans of liberal education?' 'In the sentiments which he expresses,' says Ewald ^a, 'in the topics of his discourses, and in the manner of expression, Isaiah uniformly reveals himself as the kingly prophet. . . . His discourse varies: it is tender and stern, didactic and threatening, mourning and again exulting in divine joy, mocking and earnest; but ever at the right time it returns to its original elevation and repose, and never loses the clear ground-colour of its divine seriousness.' And it is through Isaiah's prophetic vision that we may still look forward with hopefulness and confidence, athwart the darkness and selfishness of our race, to that golden age to which he has taught us to aspire, when our 'eyes shall see the King in His beauty', and when 'of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end.'

^a Quoted in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. i, pp. 288-9.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

i—xxxix ^a.

The Superscription. i. 1.

THE vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he ¹ saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Introductory. i. 2—31.

A PROPHECY OF THE TIME OF THE SYRO-EPHRAIMITISH WAR (755 B.C., see ver. 7-9), OR OF THE ASSYRIAN INVASION (701 B.C.), PLACED AS A FITTING INTRODUCTION OR 'OVERTURE' (Delitzsch) TO THE PROPHECIES OF THIS BOOK.

THE GREAT ARRAIGNMENT (EWALD).

Heaven and earth summoned to testify to the unnaturalness of Israel's rebellion. i. 2, 3.

Hear, O heavens, 2

And give ear, O earth,

For the LORD hath spoken :

I have ¹ nourished and brought up children,

And they have rebelled against me.

The ox knoweth his owner, 3

And the ass his master's crib :

But Israel doth not know,

My people doth not consider.

¹ Or, made great and exalted See Ezek. xxi. 4.

Her present calamities the just punishment of her estrangement from Jehovah. i. 4-9.

Ah sinful nation, 4

A people laden with iniquity,

A seed of evil-doers,

Children that deal corruptly :

They have forsaken the LORD,

They have despised the Holy One of Israel,

They are estranged *and gone* backward.

² Why will ye be still stricken, 5

² Or, Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt, &c.

^a See p. 59, note a.

That ye revolt more and more ?

¹ The whole head is sick ^a,

¹ Or, *Every*

And ¹ the whole heart faint.

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head
there is no soundness in it ;

But wounds, and bruises, and ² festering sores : ² Or, *fresh stripes*

They have not been closed, neither bound up,
neither mollified with oil.

7 Your country is desolate ;
Your cities are burned with fire ;
Your land, strangers devour it in your
presence,

And it is desolate, ³ as overthrown by ³ Or, *as the over-throw of strangers*

8 And the daughter of Zion is left

As a booth ^b in a vineyard,

As a lodge in a garden of cucumbers,

As a besieged city.

9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very
small remnant,

We should have been as Sodom ^c,

We should have been like unto Gomorrah.

*The uselessness of religious observances without
the religious character. i. 10-15.*

10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye ⁴ rulers of Sodom ; ⁴ Or, *judges*

Give ear unto the ⁵ law of our God, ye people of ⁵ Or, *teaching* [†]
Gomorrah.

11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices
unto me ? saith the LORD :

I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat
of fed beasts ;

And I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of
lambs, or of he-goats.

12 When ye come ⁶ to appear before me,

⁶ Or, *as otherwise read, to see my face* [†]

Who hath required this at your hand,

To trample my courts ^d ?

N.B. An obelus (†) attached to a marginal note shews that the alternative rendering or reading is preferred, or calls attention to some other important point.

^a Many scholars adopt the marginal rendering, but the text agrees better with the next verse. In either case it refers to the moral corruption of the people.

^b Frail and temporary structures of poles and awnings for the watchmen guarding crops or fruit.

^c The Jews had deserved the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah because their sin had been like theirs.

^d Their worship was a mere treading of Jehovah's courts.

¹ Heb. *an oblation of vanity.*

Bring no more ¹ vain oblations ; 13
Incense is an abomination unto me ;
New moon and sabbath, the calling of
assemblies,—

² Or, *I cannot away with ; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting*

² I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting.

Your new moons and your appointed feasts 14
my soul hateth :

+ ³ Or, *cumbrance*

They are a ³ trouble unto me ;

I am weary to bear them.

And when ye spread forth your hands, 15

I will hide mine eyes from you :

Yea, when ye make many prayers,

I will not hear :

Your hands are full of blood.

An earnest call to repentance. i. 16-20.

Wash you, make you clean ; 16

Put away the evil of your doings from before
mine eyes ;

Cease to do evil : learn to do well ; 17

Seek judgement, ⁴ relieve the oppressed,

Judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

+ ⁴ Or, *set right the oppressor*

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the 18
LORD :

Though your sins be as scarlet,

They shall be as white as snow ;

Though they be red like crimson,

They shall be as wool.

If ye be willing and obedient, 19

Ye shall eat the good of the land :

But if ye refuse and rebel, 20

Ye shall be devoured with the sword :

For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

The sins of Jerusalem and her rulers. i. 21-23.

How is the faithful city become an harlot ^a ! 21

She that was full of judgement !

Righteousness lodged in her,

But now murderers.

Thy ^b silver is become dross, 22

Thy wine mixed with water.

Thy princes are rebellious, 23

^a i.e. faithless by her character and conduct to her true spouse, Jehovah.
Cf. Hos. i—iii.

^b Silver and wine, i.e. the most influential in the nation. Cf. ver. 23, 26.

And companions of thieves ;
 Every one loveth gifts,
 And followeth after rewards :
 They judge not the fatherless,
 Neither doth the cause of the widow come
 unto them.

The Holy City must be purged. i. 24-27.

24 Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the
 Mighty One of Israel,

Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries,
 And avenge me of mine enemies :

25 And I will ¹ turn my hand upon thee,
 And ² throughly purge away thy dross,
 And will take away all thy ³ tin :

¹ Or, *bring
my hand
again*

² Heb. *as
with lye.*†

³ Or, *alloy*

26 And I will restore thy judges as at the first,
 And thy counsellors as at the beginning :
 Afterward thou shalt be called The city of
 righteousness, the faithful city.

27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgement,
 And ⁴ her converts with righteousness ^a.

⁴ Or, *they
that return
of her*

Apostates with their false shrines doomed. 28-31.

28 But the ⁵ destruction of the transgressors and the
 sinners shall be together,

⁵ Heb.
breaking.

And they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.

29 For they ^b shall be ashamed of the ⁶ oaks which ye
 have desired,

⁶ Or,
terebinths †

And ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye
 have chosen ^c.

30 For ye shall be as ⁷ an oak whose leaf fadeth,
 And as a garden that hath no water.

⁷ Or, *a
terebinth* †

31 And the strong shall be as tow,
 And his work as a spark ;
 And they shall both burn together,
 And none shall quench them.

^a Those in Zion who repent would be redeemed by Jehovah's righteous love.
 God saves as well as punishes, because He is just.

^b 'Ye' and 'they' refer to the same subject. This interchange of pronouns is
 not uncommon in prophetic writings generally, and is frequent in Isaiah.

^c Terebinths and gardens are allusions to the heathenish nature-worship.
 Sacred trees in gardens were common.

Part I. ii—vi (add ix. 8—x. 4).

FROM THE DEATH OF UZZIAH TO THE BEGINNING
OF THE REIGN OF AHAZ. Circa 740-736 B.C.

I. ONLY THROUGH PRESENT JUDGEMENT
IS JUDAH'S FUTURE GLORY POSSIBLE.
ii—iv.

(1) *THE ACTUAL JERUSALEM CONTRASTED
WITH THE IDEAL.* ii. 1-9.

*The Ideal:—Zion's spiritual pre-eminence in
the world.* ii. 1-4^a.

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw con-²
cerning Judah and Jerusalem.

¹ See Mic.
iv. 1-3.

¹ And it shall come to pass in the latter days, ²

That the mountain of the LORD's house

² Or, at the
head

Shall be established ² in the top of the mount-
ains,

And shall be exalted above the hills ;

And all nations shall flow unto it.

And many peoples shall go and say, ³

Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of
the LORD,

To the house of the God of Jacob ;

And he will teach us of his ways,

And we will walk in his paths :

† ³ Or,
instruction

For out of Zion shall go forth ³ the law,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

⁴ Or, among

And he shall judge ⁴ between the nations, ⁴

† ⁵ Or, decide
concerning

And shall ⁵ reprove many peoples :

And they shall beat their swords into plowshares,

And their spears into pruninghooks :

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

Neither shall they learn war any more.

Israel condemned in the light of this ideal. ii. 5-9.

O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the⁵
light of the LORD.

^a This prophecy occurs again in Mic. iv. 1-3. As the context of this latter passage is said in Jer. xxvi. 18 to have been uttered in the days of Hezekiah, it cannot be a quotation from that source. It is probable that here we have an old prophecy, quoted to shew the contrast between the future ideal and the present reality. Cf. the quotation of an old prophecy against Moab in xv—xvi. 12, and see note on Mic. iv. 1.

6 For thou hast forsaken thy people the house of
Jacob,
Because they be filled *with customs* from the
east,
And *are* soothsayers like the Philistines,
And they strike hands with^a the children of
strangers.

7 Their land also is full of silver and gold,
Neither is there any end of their treasures ;
Their land also is full of horses,
Neither is there any end of their chariots.

8 Their land also is full of idols ;
They worship the work of their own hands,
That which their own fingers have made.

9 And the mean man ¹ is bowed down,
And the great man ² is brought low :
Therefore forgive them not ^b.

¹ Or, *boweth
down*

² Or,
*humbleth
himself*

(2) *JEHOVAH'S DAY A UNIVERSAL JUDGEMENT,
BRINGING IN AN ULTIMATE SALVATION.* ii. 10—iv.

*The 'terror of the LORD' would prove the impotence
both of man and beast.* ii. 10—22,

10 Enter into the rock,
And hide thee in the dust,
From before the terror of the LORD,
And from the glory of his majesty.
11 The lofty looks of man shall be brought low,
And the haughtiness of men shall be bowed
down,
And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

12 For ³ there shall be a day of the LORD of hosts
Upon all that is proud and haughty,
And upon all that is lifted up ;
And it shall be brought low :
13 And upon all the cedars of Lebanon,
That are high and lifted up,
And upon all the oaks of Bashan ;
14 And upon all the high mountains,
And upon all the hills that are lifted up ;
15 And upon every lofty tower,
And upon every fenced wall ;

³ Or, *the
LORD of
hosts hath
a day*

^a 'Form alliances with.'

^b 'And forgive them not.' In the previous lines judgement is regarded as
having already taken place.

¹ Or, watch-towers

And upon all the ships of Tarshish ^a, 16
And upon all pleasant ¹ imagery ^b.

And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, 17
And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low :
And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.
And the idols shall utterly pass away. 18

² Heb. dust.

And men shall go into the caves of the rocks, 19
And into the holes of the ² earth,
From before the terror of the LORD,
And from the glory of his majesty,
When he ariseth to shake mightily the earth.

In that day a man shall cast away 20
His idols of silver, and his idols of gold,
Which they made for him to worship,
To the moles and to the bats ;
To go into the caverns of the rocks, 21
And into the clefts of the ragged rocks,
From before the terror of the LORD,
And from the glory of his majesty,
When he ariseth to shake mightily the earth.

[†] ³ The Sept. omits this verse.

³ Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his 22
nostrils :
For wherein is he to be accounted of ^c?

*The coming poverty and loss of men would be a just
punishment for the people's sins. iii. 1-11.*

For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take ³
away from Jerusalem and from Judah stay and staff,
the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water ;
the mighty man, and the man of war ; the judge, and ²
[†] ⁴ Or, elder the prophet, and the diviner, and the ⁴ ancient ; the ³
captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the
⁵ Or, charmer counsellor, and the cunning ⁵ artificer, and the skilful
enchanter.

[†] ⁰ Or, With childishness shall they rule over them.

And I will give children to be their princes, 4
⁶ And babes shall rule over them.
And the people shall be oppressed, 5
Every one by another,
And every one by his neighbour :

^a Perhaps Tartessus at the mouth of the Guadalquivir in Spain. See note on xxiii. 1 ; but here probably any large ships, whatever their destination.

^b The word 'imagery' is very obscure. Possibly it refers to the carving of the prows of ships.

^c This verse is probably a marginal gloss.

The child shall behave himself proudly against
the ¹ancient,

¹ Or, *elder* †

And the base against the honourable ^a.

6 When a man shall take hold of his brother in the
house of his father, *saying*, Thou hast clothing ^b, be
thou our ²ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand: ² Or, *judge*

7 in that day shall he lift up *his voice*, saying, I will not
be ³an healer; for in my house is neither bread nor ³ Heb. *a*
clothing ^c: ye shall not make me ruler of the people. *binder up.*

8 For Jerusalem is ruined,

And Judah is fallen:

Because their tongue and their doings are against
the LORD,

To provoke the eyes of his glory.

9 ⁴The shew of their countenance doth witness ⁴ Or, *Their*
against them; *respecting*

And they declare their sin as Sodom,

of persons
doth &c.

They hide it not.

Woe unto their soul! for they have ⁵rewarded ⁵ Or, *done*
evil unto themselves.

10 Say ye of the righteous, that *it shall be well with*
him:

For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

11 Woe unto the wicked! *it shall be ill with him*:

For the ⁶reward of his hands shall be ⁷given him. ⁶ Or, *doing* †

⁷ Heb. *done*
to him.

The impotence of Judah's rulers courted disaster.

iii. 12-15.

12 As for my people, children are their oppressors ^d,

And women rule over them.

O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err,

And ^edestroy the way of thy paths.

⁸ Heb.
swallow up.

13 The LORD standeth up to plead,

And standeth to judge the ⁹peoples.

⁹ Or, *people*

14 The LORD will enter into judgement

With the elders of his people,

And the princes thereof:

It is ye that have eaten up the vineyard;

The spoil of the poor is in your houses:

^a The impotence of their rulers would produce anarchy.

^b A man with clothing would be considered a rich man, worthy therefore to rule. See note on iv. 1.

^c i.e. 'I am every whit as poor as you.'

^d With probable reference to Ahaz, who came to the throne at the age of twenty. Ver. 12-15 probably belong to a later date than the rest.

What mean ye that ye crush my people, 15
 And grind the face of the poor?
 Saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

The wanton luxury of the women would be punished.
 iii. 16—iv. 1.

Moreover the LORD said, Because the daughters of 16
 Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks
 and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and
 making a tinkling with their feet^a: therefore the Lord 17
 will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the
 daughters of Zion, and the LORD will lay bare their
 secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away 18
 the bravery of their anklets, and the¹ cauls, and the
 crescents; the pendants, and the² bracelets, and the 19
 mufflers; the headtires, and the ankle chains, and 20
 the sashes, and the perfume boxes, and the amulets;
 the rings, and the nose jewels; the festival robes,²¹
 and the mantles, and the shawls, and the satchels;²²
 the hand mirrors, and the fine linen, and the turbans,²³
 and the veils. And it shall come to pass, that 24

Instead of sweet spices there shall be rottenness;
 And instead of a girdle a rope;
 And instead of well-set hair baldness;
 And instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth:
 Branding instead of beauty.

Thy men shall fall by the sword, 25

And thy³ mighty in the war.

And her gates shall lament and mourn; 26

And she shall be⁴ desolate and sit upon the ground.

And seven women shall take hold of one man in that 4
 day, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our
 own apparel: only let us be called by thy name; take
 thou away our reproach^b.

*The future glory of an Israel sanctified and prosperous
 and divinely protected. iv. 2-6.*

In that day shall the⁵ branch of the LORD^c be 2
 beautiful and glorious,

^a Their feet were connected by chains so that they could only take short footsteps.

^b i.e. the reproach of having no children. 'A companion picture to iii. 6
 the male population are in search of a ruler; the women in search of
 a husband.' Weir, quoted by Cheyne.

^c 'That which Jehovah causes to spring forth', most naturally taken with
 'the fruit of the land' to signify the fertility of the soil, in contrast to the
 poverty threatened in iii. 1—iv. 1. The word is quite different from that
 translated 'branch' in xi. 1.

¹ Or,
networks

² Or, *chains*

³ Heb.
might.

⁴ Or,
emptied

⁵ Or, *shoot*,
 or, *sprout*

And the fruit of the ¹land shall be ²excellent and ¹Or, *earth*
comely ²Or, *majestic*
For them that are escaped of Israel.

- 3 And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion,
And he that remaineth in Jerusalem,
Shall be called holy,
Even every one that is written ³among the living in ³Or, *unto life* †
Jerusalem :
- 4 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of
the daughters of Zion,
And shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from
the midst thereof,
By the ⁴spirit of judgement, ⁴Or, *blast* †
And by the ⁴spirit of burning.
- 5 And the LORD will create over ⁵the whole habita- ⁵Or, *every*
tion of mount Zion, and over her assemblies, *dwelling*
A cloud and smoke by day, *place* †
And the shining of a flaming fire by night :
For over all the glory *shall be spread* a canopy.
- 6 And there shall be a pavilion for a shadow in the
day-time from the heat,
And for a refuge and for a covert from storm and
from rain.

II. THE CORRUPTION AND THE PUNISH- MENT OF JUDAH. v (add ix. 8—x. 4).

(1) THE PARABLE OF JEHOVAH'S VINEYARD.

v. 1, 2.

- 5 Let me sing ⁶for my wellbeloved ⁶Or, *of*
A song of my beloved touching his vineyard.
My wellbeloved had a vineyard
In ⁷a very fruitful hill : ⁷Heb. *a*
² And he ⁸made a trench about it, *horn, the*
And gathered out the stones thereof, *son of oil.*
And planted it with the choicest vine, ⁸Or, *digged it* †
And built a tower in the midst of it,
And also hewed out a ⁹winepress therein : ⁹Or, *winefat*
And he looked that it should bring forth grapes,
And it brought forth wild grapes.

(2) THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PARABLE.

v. 3-7.

- 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of
Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vine-

yard. What could have been done more to my⁴
vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore,
when I looked that it should bring forth grapes,
brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will⁵
tell you what I will do to my vineyard:

Or, *burnt*

I will take away the hedge thereof,
And it shall be ¹eaten up;
I will break down the fence thereof,
And it shall be trodden down:
And I will lay it waste;
It shall not be pruned nor hoed;
But there shall come up briars and thorns:
I will also command the clouds
That they rain no rain upon it.

For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house⁷
of Israel,

² Heb. *The
plant of
his delight.*

And the men of Judah ² his pleasant plant:

³ Or,
*shedding
of blood.*

And he looked for judgement,
But behold ³ oppression;
For righteousness,
But behold a cry^a.

(3) *THE SINS ('wild grapes') OF JUDAH*^b. v. 8-24.

Land-grabbing. v. 8-10.

Woe unto them that join house to house,
That lay field to field, till there be no room,
And ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of
the land!

In mine ears *saith* the LORD of hosts,
Of a truth many houses shall be desolate,
Even great and fair,
Without inhabitant.

⁴ See Ezek.
xiv. 11.

For ^cten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath,
And a ⁴homer of seed shall yield *but* an ephah.

Luxury and drunken revelry. v. 11-17.

Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning,
That they may follow strong drink;

^a There is a double assonance here in the Hebrew which cannot be seen in the English, intended to carry out the thought of the outward resemblance of good and wild grapes; as we might say, He looked for right, but behold might.

^b Then follow (with x. 4) the seven sins of Judah, the punishment of one, two, six, and seven being given explicitly.

^c 'That is to say, 'About five English acres would produce only about 9 gallons of wine, and 11 bushels of seed only about 1 bushel of corn.' See note on ver. 17.

That tarry late into the night,
Till wine inflame them !

- 12 And the harp and the lute, the tabret and the pipe,
and wine, are *in* their feasts :
But they regard not the work of the LORD,
Neither have they considered the operation of
his hands.

- 13 Therefore my people are gone into captivity, for
lack of knowledge :
And ¹ their honourable men are famished,
And their multitude are parched with thirst.

¹ Heb. *their
glory are
men of
famine.*

- 14 Therefore ² hell ^a hath enlarged her desire,
And opened her mouth without measure :
And their glory, and their multitude, and their
³ pomp, and he that rejoiceth among them, ³ Or, *tumult*
descend *into it*.

² Or, *the
grave*
Heb. *Sheol*.
See Gen.
xxxvii. 35.

- 15 And the mean man is bowed down,
And the great man is humbled,
And the eyes of the lofty are humbled :
16 But the LORD of hosts is exalted in judgement,
And God the Holy One is sanctified in right-
eousness.

- 17 Then shall the lambs ^b feed as in their pasture,
And the waste places of the fat ones shall ⁴ wan- ⁴ Or, *strangers*
derers eat.

Scoffing defiance and unbelief. v. 18, 19.

- 18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity,
And sin as it were with a cart rope ^c :
19 That say, Let him make speed, let him hasten
his work,
That we may see it :
And let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel
draw nigh and come,
That we may know it !

Moral perversity. v. 20.

- 20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil ;

^a The place of departed spirits (Sheol).

^b Lambs peacefully feed as in their own pastures on the ruined wastes where once men revelled. Many commentators read 'kids' for 'wanderers'. Ewald (followed by Cheyne, George Adam Smith, &c.) places this verse after ver. 10.

^c By their sin they draw upon themselves further sin, as a bullock draws a cart after him. Sin here is of course a noun and not a verb.

That put darkness for light, and light for darkness ;
That put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter !

Self-satisfaction and conceit. v. 21.

Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, 21
And prudent in their own sight !

Dissolute and corrupt tribunals. v. 22-24.

Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, 22
And men of strength to mingle strong drink :
Which justify the wicked for a reward, 23
And take away the righteousness of the righteous
from him !

Therefore as the tongue of fire devoureth the 24
stubble,

And as the dry grass sinketh down in the flame,
So their root shall be as rottenness,
And their blossom shall go up as dust :

¹ Or,
teaching

Because they have rejected the ¹ law of the LORD of
hosts,

And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel ^a.

* * * * *

(4) *JEHOVAH'S CONTINUAL ANGER AGAINST HIS
PEOPLE.* v. 25.

Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against 25
his people,

And he hath stretched forth his hand against
them, and hath smitten them,

And the hills did tremble,

And their carcases were as refuse in the midst of
the streets.

For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still ^b.

(5) *THE APPROACH OF THE TERRIBLE ENEMY
SUMMONED BY JEHOVAH.* v. 26-30.

And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, 26

And will hiss ^c for ² them from the end of the
earth :

And, behold, ³ they shall come with speed swiftly :

² Heb. *him*.

³ Heb. *he*,
and in the
following
verses.

^a Here, or according to many commentators after ver. 25, followed ix. 8—x. 4.

^b This refrain declaring the continuance of God's wrath is found at the end of each of the four strophes in ix. 8—x. 4.

^c Delitzsch explains the metaphor as that of a bee-master enticing bees by hissing and whistling, and compares Virgil, *Georg.* iv. 64. Cf. vii. 18.

27 None shall be weary nor stumble among them ;
None shall slumber nor sleep ;
Neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed,
Nor the latchet of their shoes be broken :

28 Whose arrows are sharp,
And all their bows bent ;
Their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint,
And their wheels like a whirlwind :

29 Their roaring shall be like a lion,
They shall roar like young lions :
Yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey,
And carry it away safe, and there shall be none
to deliver.

30 And they shall roar ¹ against them in that day ¹ Or, *over*
like the roaring of the sea : ² According
And if one look unto the land, to the Mas-
² Behold darkness *and* distress, soretic text,
And the light is darkened in the clouds *Behold darkness ; dis-*
thereof. *tress and light ; it is dark &c.*

III. ISAIAH'S CALL AND MISSION. vi.

A glorious vision of Jehovah and His court. vi. 1-4.

6 In the year that king Uzziah died ^a
I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and
lifted up,

And his ³ train filled the temple ^b. ³ Or, *skirts*

2 Above him stood the seraphim :

Each one had six wings ;
With twain he covered his face,
And with twain he covered his feet,
And with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said,
Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts :

⁴ The whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the foundations of the thresholds were ⁴ Heb. *The fulness of the whole earth is his glory.*
moved at the voice of him that cried,
And the house was filled with smoke.

Isaiah's self-abasement and purification. vi. 5-7.

5 Then said I, Woe is me ! for I am undone ;
Because I am a man of unclean lips,

^a About 740 B. C.

^b Or perhaps 'palace', the alternative meaning of the word, though commonly used of the temple. The word Lord (not LORD = Jehovah, the name of God) points here to this kingly character.

And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips :

For mine eyes have seen ^a the King, the LORD of hosts.

Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having ⁶ a ¹ live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he touched my ⁷ mouth with it, and said,

¹ Or, *hot stone*

Lo, this hath touched thy lips ;
And thine iniquity is taken away,
And thy sin ² purged.

^{† 2} Or, *expiated*

The commission of a seemingly fruitless ministry.
vi. 8-10.

And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 8
Whom shall I send,
And who will go for us ?

Then I said, Here am I ; send me.

And he said, Go, and tell this people, 9

^{† 3} Or, *continually*

Hear ye ³ indeed, but understand not ;
And see ye ³ indeed, but perceive not.
Make the heart of this people fat,
And make their ears heavy, 10
And shut their eyes ;

Lest they see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,

⁴ Or, *their hearts should understand*

And ⁴ understand with their heart,
And turn again, and be healed.

A prospect of repeated ruin, with the hope of a holy remnant saved at last. vi. 11-13.

Then said I, Lord, how long ? And he answered, 11

Until cities be waste without inhabitant,
And houses without man,
And the land become utterly waste,
And the LORD have removed men far away, 12
And the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land.

⁵ Or, *But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten up*

⁶ Or, *burnt*

⁷ Or, *Whose substance is in them*

⁸ Or, *substance*

⁹ Or, *cast their leaves*

⁵ And if there be yet a tenth in it,
It shall again be ⁶ eaten up : 13

As a terebinth, and as an oak,
⁷ Whose ⁸ stock remaineth, when they ⁹ are felled ;
So the holy seed is the ⁸ stock thereof ^b.

^a An anthropomorphic representation for realising the character of God, as in Exod. xxxiii. 18—xxxiv. 7.

^b Just as stumps of felled trees still retain life, so the germ of an indestructible life will be found in the Israel which is to be ruined. But a difficult question

Part II. vii—ix. 7^a.

THE CRISIS OF THE SYRO-ISRAEL ALLIANCE
AGAINST JUDAH IN THE REIGN OF AHAZ.
Circa 735 B.C.

I. THE PROPHECY OF IMMANUEL vii.

Judah's terror at the confederated foes. vii. 1, 2.

7 And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to war against it; but could not prevail against it.
2 And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria¹ is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was¹ Heb. moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of *resteth on Ephraim.* the forest are moved with the wind^b.

Isaiah's encouraging message to king and people.
vii. 3-9.

3 Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and² Shear-jashub^c thy son, at² That is, the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the *A remnant shall return.*
4 high way of the fuller's field; and say unto him,
Take heed, and be quiet;
Fear not, neither let thine heart be faint,
Because of these two tails of smoking fire-
brands^d,
For the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria,
And of the son of Remaliah^e.
5 Because Syria hath counselled evil against thee,
Ephraim *also*, and the son of Remaliah, saying,
6 Let us go up against Judah, and vex it,
And let us make a breach therein for us,
And set up a king in the midst of it,
Even the son of Tabeel^f:
7 Thus saith the Lord GOD,
It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

here arises. LXX omits last clause of ver. 13 and some critics regard it as a gloss. In any case the chief thought is not so much the hope of a remnant as the way in which the remnant was again and again to be all but annihilated.

^a For ix. 8—x. 4, see Part I. ^b See 2 Kings xvi. 5-9.

^c Isaiah's sons are given symbolical names. Cf. x. 21, viii. 3, 4, and Hosea i. 4-9. See note on ver. 14.

^d A scornful way of expressing the impotence of these allies before the power of Assyria.

^e The expression is meant to denote contempt for Pekah's low birth.

^f Probably another obscure adventurer.

For the head of Syria is Damascus, 8
 And the head of Damascus is Rezin ^a :
 And within threescore and five years ^b shall Ephraim
 be broken in pieces, that it be not a people :
 And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, 9
 And the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son ^c.
 If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be estab-
 lished.

The sign of Immanuel given. vii. 10-16.

And the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, 10
 Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God ; 11

† ¹ Accord-
 ing to some
 ancient
 authorities,
*Make it deep
 unto Sheol.*

¹ Ask it either in the depth ^d, or in the height
 above.

But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the 12
 LORD ^e.

And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David ; 13

Is it a small thing for you to weary men,

That ye will weary my God also ?

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign ; 14

Behold, ² a ³ virgin ⁴ shall conceive ^f, and bear a
 son,

² Or, *the*
 † ³ Or,
maiden

† ⁴ Or, *is*
with child,
and beareth

⁵ That is,
God is with
us

And shall call his name ⁵ Immanuel.

⁶ Butter and honey shall he eat ^g, 15

⁷ When he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose
 the good.

⁶ Or, *Curds*

⁷ Or, *That he*
may know

For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, 16

and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou
 abhorrest shall be forsaken.

^a Is *only* Rezin.

^b The period of sixty-five years seems to point to the devastations under
 Esar-haddon and Assur-ban-i-pal. (See Ezra iv. 2, 10 and Cheyne *in loco*.)

^c Is *only* Remaliah's son. Whereas 'the head of Judah is Jerusalem, and
 the head of Jerusalem is Jehovah Sabaoth'. (Ewald.)

^d The marginal rendering, which is preferable for many reasons, does not
 involve a different *reading* of the Hebrew text. The expressions are, no doubt,
 intended to be as comprehensive as possible: 'Ask for any kind of sign.'

^e The king's insincerity may be seen by the fact that he was inviting Assyria
 at that very time to attack Damascus. (See 2 Kings xvi. 7, 8.)

^f The word 'maiden' does not necessarily mean a virgin, and might be used
 of a young married woman. Isaiah may here refer to another son of the
 prophet, whose symbolical name was to signify that God would be present with
 Israel in her trials. He can be thought to refer to the birth of Hezekiah only
 if the chronology of 2 Kings xvi. 2; xviii. 2 is ignored. If the prophet foresaw
 in 'Immanuel' the Messiah, he foresaw Him sharing at first in the Assyrian
 desolations. (ver. 15.)

^g An indication of the privations the country would be subjected to in
 consequence of the invasion (see ver. 22), which would occur before the child
 reached years of discretion.

Ahaz's want of faith punished by the armies of Assyria and Egypt. vii. 17-19.

17 The LORD shall bring upon thee,
And upon thy people, and upon thy father's house,
Days that have not come,
From the day that Ephraim departed from Judah ;
Even the king of Assyria.

18 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the LORD shall hiss^a for the fly that is in the
uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt,
And for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.

19 And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in
the ¹desolate valleys,

¹ Or, *rugged*

And in the holes of the rocks,

And upon all thorns,

And upon all ²pastures.

² Or, *bushes*

*The devastation and poverty that would follow the
Assyrian invasion.* vii. 20-25.

20 In that day shall the Lord shave with a razor that
is hired,

Which is in the parts beyond the River,

Even with the king of Assyria,

The head and the hair of the feet :

And it shall also consume the beard ^b.

21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall
22 nourish a young cow, and two sheep ; and it shall come
to pass, for the abundance^c of milk that they shall give
he shall eat butter : for butter and honey shall every
one eat that is left in the midst of the land ^d.

³ Or, *where
never came
the fear of
briers and
thorns,
shall be &c.*

23 And it shall come to pass in that day, that every
place, where there were a thousand vines at a thou-
sand silverlings, shall even be for briers and thorns^e.
24 With arrows and with bow shall one come thither ;
25 because all the land shall be briers and thorns. And
all the hills that were digged with the mattock, ³thou

*Or, there
shall not
come thither
the fear . . .
but it shall
be &c.*

^a See note on v. 26. The prophet anticipates an invasion, or possibilities
of an invasion, from Egypt as well as from Assyria. For the same uncertainty,
cf. Hosea ix. 3, &c.

^b The devastation of the country is compared to cutting off the hair from the
human body. 'The head . . . the feet' implies that it would be from end to end.

^c Even this would be enough, because men would be so few.

^d See note on ver. 15.

^e A silverling = a shekel, or 2s. 9d. of our money. A vine at this price
would be costly indeed. Such land would now only be hunted over ; while the
fields that were formerly agricultural would become waste, with scanty pastures.

shalt not come thither for fear of briers and thorns, but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of sheep.

II. PROPHECIES OR FRAGMENTS DEALING WITH THE SAME SUBJECT. viii.

The sign of the speedy overthrow of Syria and Israel.

viii. 1-4.

Or, in
common
characters

² That is,
*The spoil
speedeth,
the prey
hasteth.*

And the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great tablet^a, **8** and write upon it ¹ with the pen of a man, For ² Maher-shalal-hash-baz; and I will take unto me ² faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah. And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD unto me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. For before the child shall have knowledge ⁴ to cry, My father, and, My mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria ^b.

The enemy would strive in vain against Immanuel.

viii. 5-10.

And the LORD spake unto me yet again, saying, **5**
Forasmuch as this people hath refused the waters ⁶
of Shiloah that go softly ^c,

³ Or, *Even
them that
rejoice*

³ And rejoice ⁴ in Rezin and Remaliah's son ^d;
Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up ⁷
upon them

⁴ Or, *with*

The waters of the River,
Strong and many,

Even the king of Assyria and all his glory:
And he shall come up over all his channels,
And go over all his banks: -

^a A symbolical action, the chief feature of which is the name afterwards given to the prophet's son. Some legal process like registration or settlement of property is referred to. God takes witnesses to establish the truth of this prophecy.

^b Cf. vii. 16.

^c They refused the quiet constant aid of Jehovah, who dwelleth in Zion. The pool of Siloam on the south-west side of the Temple Mount, near the mouth of the Tyropœan valley (which runs through the midst of Jerusalem), is artificial. It was connected in Hezekiah's reign, if not before, with the pool Gihon to the east, the only natural spring in Jerusalem, by a rock-hewn tunnel, which was discovered, with an inscription descriptive of its making, in A.D. 1880. The name Shiloah, from a word meaning 'send', suggests a conduit, and the expression 'that go softly' indicates the gentle flow along the slight decline of the tunnel. Cf. 2 Kings xx. 20; Ps. xlv. 4; and John ix. 7.

^d These words either refer to the Northern Kingdom, and, if so, we must regard it as included in the indictment (see ver. 14), or possibly to a philo-Israel conspiracy in Judah.

8 And he shall sweep onward into Judah ;
 He shall overflow and pass through ;
 He shall reach even to the neck ;
 And the stretching out of his wings
 Shall fill the breadth of thy land,

¹ O IMMANUEL ^a.

9 ² Make an uproar, O ye peoples ^b,
 And ye shall be broken in pieces ;
 And give ear, all ye of far countries :
 Gird yourselves,
 And ye shall be broken in pieces ;
 Gird yourselves,
 And ye shall be broken in pieces.

10 Take counsel together,
 And it shall be brought to nought ;
 Speak the word,
 And it shall not stand :
 For ³ GOD IS WITH US.

¹ See
 ch. vii. 14.
² Or, *Break*
 According
 to some
 ancient
 authorities,
Associate
yourselves.

³ Heb.
immanu El.

*Isaiah divinely taught not to give way to the general
 panic but to trust in Jehovah's power. viii. 11-15.*

11 For the LORD spake thus to me ⁴ with a strong hand, ⁴ Heb. *with*
 And instructed me that I should not walk in the *strength of*
 way of this people, ^c saying,
 See

12 Say ye not, A conspiracy,
 Concerning all whereof this people shall say, A con-
 spiracy ;

Neither fear ye their fear, nor be in dread *thereof*.

13 The LORD of hosts, him shall ye sanctify ;
 And let him be your fear,
 And let him be your dread.

14 And he shall be for a sanctuary ;
 But for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence
 To both the houses of Israel,
 For a gin and for a snare
 To the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

15 And ⁵ many shall stumble thereon, and fall, and be
 broken, and be snared, and be taken ^d.

⁴ ⁵ Or, *many*
among them
shall stum-
ble, and fall
&c.

^a Probably we should translate Immanuel as in ver. 10—God with us. In
 both cases the prophet emphasises the saving presence of Jehovah. For change
 of pronouns, 'thy' for 'their' or 'his', see note on i. 29.

^b Let the enemies of God's people do their worst! An imaginary alliance of
 foreign and distant powers to overthrow the nation defeated by God.

^c Isaiah and his fellows were not to dread the Syro-Israel conspiracy which
 people were talking so much about.

^d There is a double metaphor here. If trusted, God protects ; if disregarded,
 He destroys.

The prophet's withdrawal for a time: he and his sons are tokens of God's good faith to his followers.
viii. 16-18.

+¹ Or,
teaching

Bind thou up the testimony ^a, 16
Seal the ¹ law among my disciples.
And I will wait for the LORD, 17
That hideth his face from the house of Jacob,
And I will look for him.
Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath 18
given me
Are for signs and for wonders in Israel
From the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in
mount Zion.

Not necromancy but God's teaching by the prophet must be consulted or utter despair will be their portion.
viii. 19-22.

And when they shall say unto you ^b, 19
Seek unto them that have familiar spirits
And unto the wizards,
That chirp and that mutter:
Should not a people seek unto their God?
On behalf of the living *should they seek* unto the
dead?

² Or, Surely
according
to this word
shall they
speak, for
whom there
is no morn-
ing

To the ¹ law and to the testimony! 20
² If they speak not according to this word,
Surely there is no morning for them ^c.

+³ Or, curse
their king
and their
God

And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and 21
hungry: and it shall come to pass that, when they
shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and
curse by their king and by their God ^d, and turn
their faces upward: and they shall look unto the 22
earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom

^a The prophet turns in despair to his disciples and commits to them his testimony and teaching on a roll, bound up and sealed.

^b It is perhaps best to take these words as addressed by God to the prophet and his disciples, as in ver. 12. Those who had familiar spirits were spiritualistic mediums, who professed to hold intercourse with the dead. 'Chirp and mutter' refer probably to the supposed utterances of ghosts. See note on xxix. 4.

^c They should seek out the prophet's teaching. If they do not agree to this, it is because their minds are hopelessly dark. But both the translation and the interpretation of the whole passage is very uncertain.

^d i.e. curse their ill-fate by their idol, king and God being in this case synonymous. But it is superstition rather than idolatry which is here condemned, and we should probably render as in marg. and A.V. They curse their king because he cannot, and their God because He will not help them.

of anguish; ¹ and ² into thick darkness *they shall be* ¹ Or, and
driven away ^a. *thick darkness shall be driven away: for there &c.*
² Or, in

III. THE COMING OF THE PRINCE OF PEACE IN HIS ETERNAL KINGDOM OF LIGHT AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. ix. 1-7.

*Though the present aspect be dark, the glorious age of
peace will dawn.* ix. 1-5.

² ³ But there shall be no gloom to her that was in
anguish ^b. ³ Or, For
[ch. viii. 23
in Heb.]

In the former time he brought into contempt the
land of Zebulun

And the land of Naphtali,

But in the latter time hath he made it glorious,

By the way of the sea,

Beyond Jordan,

⁴ Galilee of the nations.

² The people that walked in darkness

Have seen a great light:

They that dwelt in the land of the ⁵ shadow of ⁵ Or, deep
death, *darkness* [†]

Upon them hath the light shined.

³ Thou hast multiplied the nation,

[†] Thou hast increased their joy:

They joy before thee according to the joy in ⁶ Another
harvest, *reading is,
Thou didst
not increase
the joy.*

As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

⁴ For the yoke of his burden,

And the staff of his shoulder,

The rod of his oppressor,

Thou hast broken as in the day of Midian ^c.

⁵ For ⁷ all the armour of the armed man in the ⁷ Or, every
tumult, *boot of the
booted
warrior* [†]

And the garments rolled in blood,

Shall even be for burning,

For fuel of fire ^d.

^a These last two verses describe the utter despondency and misery to which
the practice of necromancy leads.

^b A passage of great difficulty: perhaps due to the corruption of the text.
Probably its primary meaning is that God who, by His instruments Tiglath-
Pileser III. and subsequently Sargon, had brought great trouble on the Northern
Kingdom by first depriving it of Zebulun and Naphtali, and then (in 722) com-
pleting its destruction, would now (the tense of prophetic certainty is employed)
bring life and light, joy and peace.

^c When Gideon overthrew the Midianites. Judges vii. Cf. x. 26.

^d The soldier's accoutrements shall be burned up because no longer needed.
Cf. Zech. ix. 10.

The birth, title, and reign of the Messiah. ix. 6, 7.

For unto us a child is born, 6
 Unto us a son is given ;
 And the government shall be upon his shoulder :
 And his name shall be called
 ¹ Wonderful, Counsellor,
 Mighty God,
 ² Everlasting Father,
 Prince of Peace.

+¹ Or,
*Wonderful
 counsellor*

² Heb.
*Father of
 Eternity.*

Of the increase of his government 7
 And of peace there shall be no end,
 Upon the throne of David, and upon his king-
 dom,
 To establish it, and to uphold it
 With judgement and with righteousness
 From henceforth even for ever.
 The zeal of the LORD of hosts shall perform this.

* * * *

(1) *THE SINS ('wild grapes') OF THE NORTHERN
 KINGDOM*^a, ix. 8-21.

Pride and self-assurance. ix. 8-12.

The Lord sent a word into Jacob, 8
 And it hath lighted upon Israel.
 And all the people shall know, 9
Even Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria,
 That say in pride and in stoutness of heart,
 The bricks are fallen ^b, 10
 But we will build with hewn stone :
 The sycomores are cut down,
 But we will change them into cedars.

^a Or, *hath set*

⁴ Or, *hath
 stirred*

⁵ Or, *join
 together
 Or, arm*

Therefore the LORD ³ shall set up on high against 11
 him the adversaries of Rezin ^c,
 And ⁴ shall ⁵ stir up his enemies ;

^a This section, as shewn by the refrain in ver. 12, 17, 21 ; x. 4 (cf. v. 25), should probably be placed between ver. 24 and 25 of ch. v, for it is a continuation of the Prophecy of the Vineyard in that chapter. It is, however, not unlikely that ix. 8-21, dealing especially with the sins of the Northern Kingdom, was an addition to the original prophecy in the time of Ahaz, as it has a literary character of its own, and x. 1-4 containing the last woe is even more closely related to ch. v. Its dislocation is probably due to the fact that some copies of Isaiah may have been without it.

^b It is possible that this is a fragment of a drinking song. Cf. Amos vi. 13, Hos. vii. 10, for a similar spirit of bravado. Dwellings of sun-dried bricks and of the common mulberry (sycomore) tree are still used by the peasants of Palestine to-day. Those which had been destroyed by the enemy would give place to better buildings. ^c i. e. the Assyrians. See 2 Kings xvi. 7.

- 12 The Syrians ¹before, and the Philistines ²behind ; ¹ Or, *on the east*
 And they ³shall devour Israel with open mouth. ² Or, *on the west*
 For all this his anger is not turned away, ³ Or, *have devoured*
 But his hand is stretched out still ^a.

Stubbornness and unrepentance. ix. 13-17.

- 13 Yet the people hath not turned unto him that
 smote them,
 Neither have they sought the LORD of hosts.
 14 Therefore the LORD ⁴will cut off from Israel ⁴ Or, *hath cut*
 Head and tail,
 Palm-branch and rush,
 In one day.
 15 The ⁵ancient and the honourable man, he is the ⁵ Or, *elder*
 head ;
 And the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.
 16 For they that lead this people cause them to err ;
 And they that are led of them are ⁶destroyed. ⁶ Heb. *swallowed up.*
 17 Therefore the Lord shall not rejoice over their
 young men,
 Neither shall he have compassion on their father-
 less and widows :
 For every one is profane and an evil-doer,
 And every mouth speaketh folly.
 For all this his anger is not turned away,
 But his hand is stretched out still.

A blazing anarchy which brings its own punishment.

ix. 18-21.

- 18 For wickedness burneth as the fire ;
 It devoureth the briers and thorns :
 Yea, it kindleth in the thickets of the forest,
 And they roll upward in thick clouds of smoke.
 19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the
 land ⁷burnt up : ⁷ Or, *darkened*
 The people also are as the fuel of fire ;
 No man spareth his brother.
 20 And one shall snatch on the right hand,
 And be hungry ;
 And he shall eat on the left hand,
 And they shall not be satisfied :
 They shall eat every man the flesh of his own
 arm ^b :
 21 Manasseh, Ephraim ; and Ephraim, Manasseh :

^a Even this punishment does not satisfy the demands of justice.

^b i. e. engage in suicidal conflict with brother tribes.

And they together shall be against Judah^a.
 For all this his anger is not turned away,
 But his hand is stretched out still.

(2) *THE LAST OF THE 'WILD GRAPES' OF
 JUDAH.*

Unjust tribunals. x. 1-4.

Woe^b unto them that decree unrighteous decrees^c, 10

And to the writers that write perverseness :

To turn aside the needy from judgement, 2

And to take away the right of the poor of my
 people,

That widows may be their spoil,

And that they may make the fatherless their prey !

And what will ye do in the day of visitation, 3

And in the desolation which shall come from
 far ?

To whom will ye flee for help ?

And where will ye leave your glory^d ?

¹ They shall only bow down under the prisoners, 4

And shall fall under the slain^e.

For all this his anger is not turned away,
 But his hand is stretched out still.

¹ Or,
*Without me
 they shall
 bow down
 &c.*

* * * *

Part III. Ch. x. 5—xii.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MESSIANIC KING-
 DOM UPON THE FAILURE OF THE ASSYRIAN
 CAMPAIGN^f (717-701 B.C.).

I. THE PUNISHMENT OF ASSYRIAN PRIDE.

x. 5-34.

Assyria is merely God's rod of chastisement. x. 5-11.

+ ² Or, *Woe
 to Asshur*

² Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, 5

The staff in whose hand is mine indignation !

I will send him against a profane nation, 6

And against the people of my wrath will I give
 him a charge,

^a Such an alliance as that of Rezin and Pekah. 2 Kings xv. 37 ; xvi. 5.

^b This woe connects this paragraph very clearly with v. 8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22.

^c Not laws, but unjust legal decisions.

^d Your wealth (money and possessions).

^e They must fall down exhausted beneath those that were falling in battle, or being led away captive.

^f It is very uncertain whether this prophecy has reference to the Assyrian invasion of Sargon or to that of Sennacherib. The position of the chapters rather favours the former.

To take the spoil,
And to take the prey,
And ¹to tread them down like the mire of the ¹ Heb. *to*
streets. *make them*
a treading
down.

7 Howbeit he meaneth not so ^a,
Neither doth his heart think so ;
But it is in his heart to destroy,
And to cut off nations not a few.

8 For he saith, Are not my princes all of them
kings ^b ?

9 Is not Calno as Carchemish ^c ?
Is not Hamath as Arpad ?
Is not Samaria as Damascus ?

10 As my hand hath ² found the kingdoms of ² Or,
the idols, *reached +*

Whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem
and of Samaria ;

11 Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her
idols,

So do to Jerusalem and her idols ?

*When God's work is done by the king of Assyria, he
too will be punished for his pride. x. 12-19.*

12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord
hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and
on Jerusalem,

I will ³ punish the fruit of the stout heart of the ³ Heb.
king of Assyria, *visit upon.*

And the glory of his high looks.

13 For he hath said, By the strength of my hand
I have done it,

And by my wisdom ; for I am prudent :
And I have removed the bounds of the peoples,
And have robbed their treasures,
And I have brought down as a valiant man
⁴ them that sit *on thrones* :

14 And my hand hath found as a nest the riches
of the peoples ;

And as one gathereth eggs ^d that are forsaken,
Have I gathered all the earth :

And there was none that moved the wing,

^a In his pride he mistakes the source and the limits of his power.

^b There were many ' kings ' more or less dependent on Assyria.

^c These were all towns which various kings of Assyria had taken, and whose
idols (many as they were) had been unable to save them. Cf. 2 Kings xviii.
33-35, and see note on Amos vi. 2.

^d The same simile of bird's-nesting is found in some Assyrian inscriptions.

Or that opened the mouth, or chirped ^a.
Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth **15**
therewith?

Shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh
it ^b?

As if a rod should shake them that lift it up,
Or as if a staff should lift up *him that is* not wood ^c.

Therefore shall the Lord ^d, the LORD of hosts, send **16**
among his fat ones leanness;

¹ Or,
instead of

And ¹under his glory ^e there shall be kindled
a burning like the burning of fire.

And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, **17**

And his Holy One for a flame:

And it shall burn and devour his thorns and his
briers

In one day.

And he shall consume the glory of his forest, and **18**
of his fruitful field,

Both soul and body:

+ ² Or, as
when a sick
man pineth
away

And it shall be ²as when a standardbearer
fainteth.

And the remnant of the trees of his forest shall **19**
be few,

That a child may write them.

*The righteous remnant, after the destruction of the
wicked, would learn to put their trust in Jehovah.*

x. 20-23.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the **20**
remnant of Israel, and they that are escaped of the
house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him
that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the
Holy One of Israel, in truth.

³ Heb. *Shear
jashub*.
See ch. vii. 3.

³ A remnant shall return,
Even the remnant of Jacob,
Unto the mighty God.

21

^a Their natural protectors did as little to help them as a mother-bird could
do for her young. They were even more helpless than these, who can at least
flutter their wings and open their mouths.

^b How ludicrous this self-exaltation of the Assyrian before God, who is using
him as an instrument!

^c A meiosis: the Assyrian, for all his pride, was as much unlike God as the
wooden staff is to its owner.

^d God Himself, whom he had outraged, would prove a devouring fire, burn-
ing up his army.

^e Glory, i. e. the splendid array of his hosts. The thought of a fire kindled
under an object passes into that of a great conflagration ravaging a whole country.

- 22 For though ¹thy people Israel be as the sand of ¹Or,
the sea, *thy people,*
O Israel †
2 Heb. in it.
Only a remnant ²of them shall return :
A consumption ^ais determined, overflowing with
righteousness.
- 23 For a consummation, and that determined,
Shall the Lord, the LORD of hosts, make in the
midst of all the ³earth. *3 Or, land †*

*The nation is encouraged by the thought of the Assyrian
destruction and freedom from her yoke. x. 24-27.*

- 24 Therefore thus saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
O my people that dwellest in Zion,
Be not afraid of ⁴the Assyrian : *4 Heb.*
Though he smite thee with the rod ^b, *Asshur*
And lift up his staff against thee,
After the manner of Egypt.
- 25 For yet a very little while,
And the indignation shall be accomplished,
And ⁵mine anger, in their destruction. *5 Or, mine*
anger shall
- 26 And the LORD of hosts shall stir up against him *be to their*
a scourge, *&c. †*
As in the slaughter of Midian ^c at the rock of
Oreb :
And ⁶his rod shall be over the sea, *6 Or, as his*
And he shall lift it up *rod was*
After the manner of Egypt. *over the sea,*
so shall he
&c.
- 27 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That his burden shall depart from off thy shoulder,
And his yoke from off thy neck,
And the yoke shall be destroyed
⁷Because of ⁸the anointing ^d. *7 Or, By*
reason of

The Assyrian advance and catastrophe^e. x. 28-34. 8 Heb. oil.

- 28 He is come to Aiath,

^a The 'consumption' is the reduction of Israel's teeming inhabitants to a mere remnant. Cf. xxviii. 22 for an equivalent phrase.

^b The Assyrian would lift up his staff as the Egyptians did against Israel, but God would lift his rod against the Assyrians as effectively as Moses raised it against the Egyptians. ^c Judges vii. 25. Cf. Isa. ix. 4.

^d The last clause is probably corrupt. Duhm has reconstructed the text by carrying the last four words on to ver. 28. He renders them, 'He comes up from Pene-Rimmon'—the Rock Rimmon, a few miles north of Aiath.

^e The prophet here describes in imaginary details an advance of the Assyrians and its sudden failure. The towns, as far as they can be located, lay nearly in a line from Aiath (Ai) to Jerusalem, and represent the route which the Assyrian army is conceived as taking. The short abrupt phrases describe in rapid movement, partly the progress of the army, partly the panic of the people at its approach.

He is passed through Migron ;
 At Michmash he layeth up his baggage :
 They are gone over the pass ; 29
¹ They have taken up their lodging at Geba :
 Ramah trembleth ;
 Gibeah of Saul is fled.
 Cry aloud with thy voice, O daughter of 30
 Gallim !
 Hearken, O Laishah ^a !
² O thou poor Anathoth ^b !
 Madmenah is a fugitive ; 31
 The inhabitants of Gebim ³ gather themselves
 to flee.
 This very day shall he halt at Nob ^c : 32
 He shaketh his hand at the mount of the
⁴ daughter of Zion,
 The hill of Jerusalem.
 Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, 33
 Shall lop the boughs with terror :
 And the high ones of stature shall be hewn down,
 And the lofty shall be brought low.
 And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest 34
 with iron,
 And Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one ^d.

¹ Or, *Geba*
is our lodg-
ing, they cry

² Or, as
 otherwise
 read, *An-*
swer her, O
Anathoth!

³ Or, *make*
their house-
holds flee

⁴ Another
 reading is,
house.

II. THE VISION OF THE MESSIANIC KING AND HIS KINGDOM. xi.

His spiritual endowment. xi. 1-3a.

And there shall come forth a shoot out of the 11
 stock of Jesse ^a,
 And a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit :
 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, 2
 The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
 The spirit of counsel and might,
 The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the
 LORD ;
 And ^b his ^c delight shall be in the fear of the LORD : 3

^a Or, *he*
shall be of
quick un-
derstanding

^b Heb. *scent.*

^a Listen for the approach of the enemy.

^b Words chosen for the sake of assonance : '*Aniyah*', '*Anathoth*'.

^c Mentioned also in Neh. xi. 32 in close connexion with Anathoth. It may perhaps be the same as the Nob of 1 Sam. xxi ; and was probably about a mile north of Jerusalem.

^d The destruction of the Assyrian army is compared to a great forest stripped of its branches and then cut down. Lebanon, i. e. cedars of Lebanon.

^e In contrast with the hewing down of x. 34 we have here the growth of a shoot from the stump of Jesse, i. e. the royal house of David.

The perfect justice of His rule. xi. 3b-5.

And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes,

Neither ¹ reprove after the hearing of his ears : ¹ Or, *decide*†

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor,

And reprove with equity for the meek of the ² earth : ² Or, *land*

And he shall smite the ² earth with the rod of his mouth,

And with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,

And faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

The peacefulness of His reign^a. xi. 6-9.

6 And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb,

And the leopard shall lie down with the kid ;

And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ;

And a little child shall lead them.

7 And the cow and the bear shall feed ;

Their young ones shall lie down together :

And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,

And the weaned child shall put his hand on the

³ basilisk's den ^b. ³ Or, *adder's*

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy

In all my holy mountain :

For the earth^c shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD,

As the waters cover the sea.

The extension of His rule by the restoration of Israel, and the reconciliation or annihilation of her enemies.
xi. 10-16.

10 And it shall come to pass in that day,

That the root of Jesse, which standeth for an ensign of the peoples,

Unto him shall the nations seek ;

And his resting place shall be ⁴ glorious. ⁴ Heb. *glory*.

11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord

^a Here we have probably the language of poetic idealism. So perfect is the peace that nature herself would be in perfect harmony.

^b 'den'—Delitzsch, Ewald, and others, following the Targum, render 'pupil' of the eye, which would be very attractive to a little child.

^c i.e. the holy land, a thought further expanded in the next verse.

¹ Or, *shall again the second time recover with his hand*

+ ² Or, *purchase*
See

Ex. xv. 16.

+ ³ Or, *coastlands*

¹ shall set his hand again the second time to ² recover ^a the remnant of his people, which shall remain,

From Assyria, and from Egypt,

And from Pathros, and from Cush,

And from Elam, and from Shinar,

And from Hamath, and from the ³ islands of the sea ^b.

And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, ¹²

And shall assemble the outcasts of Israel,

And gather together the dispersed of Judah

From the four corners of the earth.

The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, ¹³

And they that vex ⁴ Judah shall be cut off:

Ephraim shall not envy Judah,

And Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

And they shall fly down upon the shoulder ^c of ¹⁴ the Philistines on the west;

Together shall they spoil the children of the east:

They shall put forth their hand upon Edom and Moab;

And the children of Ammon shall obey them.

And the LORD shall ⁵ utterly destroy the tongue ¹⁵ of the Egyptian sea ^d;

And with his ⁶ scorching wind shall he shake his hand over the River ^e,

And shall smite it into seven streams,

And cause men to march over dryshod.

And there shall be an high way for the remnant ¹⁶ of his people,

Which shall remain, from Assyria;

Like as there was for Israel

In the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

⁵ Heb.

devote.

According to some ancient versions, *dry up.*

⁶ According to some ancient versions, *mighty.*

III. THE SONGS OF THE REDEEMED. xii.

Israel's song of thanksgiving. xii. 1-3.

And in that day thou shalt say, ¹²

I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD;

For though thou wast angry with me,

^a The first 'purchase' (see marg.) was from Egypt.

^b Pathros (Upper Egypt) and Cush (Ethiopia) were dependencies of Egypt; Elam (Susiana), Shinar (Babylonia), and Hamath were dependencies of Assyria. Coastlands were countries, including islands, bordering on the Mediterranean.

^c The thought is that of a bird of prey striking the shoulder of its victim, a metaphor suggested by the fact that part of the Philistine coastland appears to have been called 'shoulder' from its shape. See Josh. xv. 11 (R.V. 'side').

^d The Red Sea. It would be therefore a greater miracle than that wrought through Moses.

^e Euphrates.

- ¹ Thine anger is turned away,
And thou comfortest me.
² Behold, God is my salvation;
I will trust, and will not be afraid:
For ² the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength ² Heb. *Jah Jehovah*.
and song;
And he is become my salvation.
³ Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the
wells of salvation ^a.

A song of exhortation to proclaim God's praises to the world. xii. 4-8.

- ⁴ And in that day shall ye say,
Give thanks unto the LORD,
³ Call upon his name,
Declare his doings among the peoples,
Make mention that his name is exalted.
⁵ Sing unto the LORD;
For he hath done ⁴ excellent things:
⁵ Let this be known in all the earth.
⁶ Cry aloud and shout,
Thou ⁶ inhabitant of Zion:
For great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst ⁶ Heb. *inhabitantress*.
of thee.

Part IV. Ch. xiii—xxiii.

THE ORACLES ^b OF THE NATIONS.

I. BABYLON. xiii—xiv. 23 (circa 549 B.C.)

The Superscription. xiii. 1.

- ¹³ The ⁷ burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of ⁷ Or, *oracle concerning*
Amoz did see ^c.

(1) *THE CAPTURE OF THE CITY BY THE MEDES.*

xiii. 2—xiv. 2.

*Jehovah musters His forces and marches before them to
Babylon.* xiii. 2-5.

- ² Set ye up an ensign upon the bare mountain,
Lift up the voice unto them,

^a Perhaps these words should be regarded not as part of the song, but as a comment of the prophet. There may be an allusion to the water in the cisterns which are still to be seen under the temple area. (Cf. Ps. lxxxvii. 7, and see note on Ezek. xlvii. 1.)

^b lit. 'a lifting up' (of the voice) or 'a thing lifted up'; of collections of proverbs, Prov. xxx. 1; xxxi. 1, or prophecies; see note on Jer. xxiii. 33-40.

^c This heading, added no doubt by a later editor, is certainly incorrect. (See Introduction, p. 60). It may have originated from the fact that this collection of burdens was originally an independent work ascribed to Isaiah. This

Wave the hand,
That they may go into the gates of the nobles.

I have commanded my consecrated ones, 3
Yea, I have called my mighty men for mine anger,
Even ¹ my proudly exulting ones.

† ¹ Or,
them that
exult in my
majesty

The noise of a multitude in the mountains, 4
Like as of a great people !

The noise of a tumult of the kingdoms of the
nations gathered together !

The LORD of hosts mustereth the host for the
battle.

They come from a far country, 5
From the uttermost part of heaven,
Even the LORD, and the weapons of his indigna-
tion,

To destroy the whole land.

The city's dismay at their approach. xiii. 6-8.

Howl ye ; for the day of the LORD is at hand ; 6
As destruction from ² the Almighty shall it come.

² Heb.
Shaddai.
See
Gen. xvii. 1.

Therefore shall all hands be feeble, 7

And every heart of man shall melt :
And they shall be dismayed ; 8

³ Or, They
shall take
hold of
pangs and
sorrows

³ Pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them ;
They shall be in pain as a woman in travail :
They shall be amazed one at another ;
Their faces shall be faces of flame.

*The day of Babylon's doom at the hands of the ruthless
Medes.* xiii. 9-18.

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh ^a, 9
Cruel, with wrath and fierce anger ;

To make the land a desolation,
And to destroy the sinners thereof out of it.
For the stars of heaven and the constellations ^b ¹⁰
thereof

Shall not give their light :
The sun shall be darkened in his going forth,
And the moon shall not cause her light to shine.
And I will punish the world for their evil, 11

prophecy probably belongs to the period of the exile when Babylon was the traditional enemy of Judah. See note on xxi. 1-10 (heading).

^a A great day of divine judgement is often described as a convulsion of nature. Cf. Mic. i. 3, 4. Here at least it suggests the definite thought that the destruction of the great world-city is the upset of existing order.

^b Lit. 'and its Orions'; i. e. Orion and other constellations.

- And the wicked for their iniquity ;
 And I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to
 cease,
 And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.
- 12 I will make a man more rare than fine gold ^a,
 Even a man than the pure gold of Ophir ^b.
- 13 Therefore I will make the heavens to tremble,
 And the earth shall be shaken out of her place,
 In the wrath of the LORD of hosts,
 And in the day of his fierce anger.
- 14 And it shall come to pass, that as the chased ¹roe, ¹Or, gazelle†
 And as sheep that no man gathereth,
 They shall turn every man to his own people ^c,
 And shall flee every man to his own land.
- 15 Every one that is found shall be thrust through ;
 And every one that is ²taken shall fall by the ²Or, joined
 sword. thereunto
- 16 Their infants also shall be dashed in pieces before
 their eyes ;
 Their houses shall be spoiled,
 And their wives ravished.
- 17 Behold, I will stir up the Medes ^d against them,
 Which shall not regard silver,
 And as for gold, they shall not delight in it.
- 18 And *their* bows shall dash the young men in
 pieces ;
 And they shall have no pity on the fruit of the
 womb ;
 Their eye shall not spare children.

Babylon becomes a haunted and desolate ruin.

xiii. 19-22.

- 19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
 The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride,
 Shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and
 Gomorrah.
- 20 It shall never be inhabited,
 Neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to
 generation :
 Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there ;

^a Because so few would be left alive.

^b Probably on the south coast of Arabia.

^c The foreign dependents, especially traders and the like.

^d The Medes, a more or less independent State of Aryan origin, east of Babylonia, were first captured by Cyrus, king of Persia, and afterwards became an important factor in his conquest of Babylonia.

Neither shall shepherds make their flocks to lie
down there.

But wild beasts of the desert ^a shall lie there ; 21

And their houses shall be full of doleful creatures ;

And ostriches shall dwell there,

¹ Or,
he-goats

And ¹ satyrs ^b shall dance there.

² Heb.

howling
creatures.

And ² wolves shall ³ cry in their castles, 22

And jackals in the pleasant palaces :

And her time is near to come,

³ Or, answer

And her days shall not be prolonged.

*The fruit of Babylon's overthrow is the reversal of
Judah's captivity. xiv. 1, 2.*

For the LORD will have compassion on Jacob, 14

And will yet choose Israel,

And set them in their own land :

And the stranger shall join himself with them,

And they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

And the peoples shall take them, 2

And bring them to their place :

And the house of Israel shall possess them in the
land of the LORD

For servants and for handmaids :

And they shall take them captive,

Whose captives they were ;

And they shall rule over their oppressors.

(2) *JUDAH'S TAUNT-SONG AGAINST THE KING
OF BABYLON. xiv. 3-21.*

*A half-sarcastic lamentation over the king of Babylon's
fate. xiv. 3-6.*

And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD ³
shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy
trouble, and from the hard service wherein thou wast
made to serve, that thou shalt take up this parable ⁴
against the king of Babylon, and say,

How hath the oppressor ceased !

+ ⁴ Or,
exactress

The ⁴ golden city ceased !

The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, 5

The sceptre of the rulers ;

⁵ Or, He that
smote . . . is
persecuted,
and none
hindereth

⁵ That smote the peoples in wrath 6

With a continual stroke,

^a Cf. the similar description of Edom in xxxiv. 13-17.

^b Probably a goat-like demon. Evil spirits were supposed in popular superstition to inhabit desert places. Cf. Matt. xii. 43 ; Lev. xvii. 7 (R.V.).

That ruled the nations in anger,
With a persecution that none restrained.

The world's rejoicing at the stilling of the tyrant.

xiv. 7, 8.

- 7 The whole earth is at rest, *and* is quiet :
They break forth into singing.
8 Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee,
And the cedars of Lebanon, *saying*,
Since thou art laid down,
No feller is come up against us.

The mockery of Hades on his arrival there. xiv. 9-11.

- 9 ¹ Hell from beneath is moved for thee
To meet thee at thy coming :
It stirreth up ² the dead for thee,
Even all the ³ chief ones of the earth ;
It hath raised up from their thrones
All the kings of the nations.
10 All they shall answer and say unto thee,
Art thou also become weak as we ?
Art thou become like unto us ?
11 Thy pomp is brought down to ¹ hell,
And the noise of thy viols :
The worm is spread under thee,
And worms cover thee.

¹ Heb.
Sheol. †

² Or, *the*
shades
Heb.
Rephaim. †
³ Heb.
he-goats. †

Humiliation to the grave of the heaven-aspiring monarch. xiv. 12-15.

- 12 How art thou fallen from heaven ^a,
O day star, son of the morning !
How art thou cut down to the ground,
Which didst lay low the nations !
13 And thou saidst in thine heart,
I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God ;
And I will sit upon the mount of congregation ^b,
In the uttermost parts of the north :
14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds ;
I will be like the Most High.
15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to ¹ hell,
To the uttermost parts of the pit ^c.

^a This expresses the overwhelming pride of the Babylonian king. Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian kings claimed a sort of divinity.

^b This expression suggests a belief in a sacred mount of the gods (like the Greek Olympus) in the extreme north. See Cheyne and Delitzsch *in loco*.

^c He would die as any other man.

The king's corpse mocked on the battle-field. xiv. 16-20.

They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, 16

They shall consider thee, *saying*,

Is this the man that made the earth to tremble,

That did shake kingdoms;

That made the world as a wilderness, 17

And overthrew the cities thereof;

That let not loose his prisoners to their home?

All the kings of the nations, all of them, 18

Sleep in glory,

Every one in his own house.

But thou art cast forth away from thy sepulchre 19

Like an abominable branch,

¹ Clothed with the slain,

That are thrust through with the sword,

That go down to the stones of the pit;

As a carcase trodden under foot.

Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, 20

Because thou hast destroyed thy land,

Thou hast slain thy people;

The seed of evil-doers shall not be named for ever.

Extermination of the kingly line. xiv. 21, 22.

Prepare ye ² slaughter for his children 21

For the iniquity of their fathers;

That they rise not up, and possess the earth,

And fill the face of the world with cities.

And I will rise up against them, 22

Saith the LORD of hosts,

And cut off from Babylon

Name and remnant, and son and son's son,

Saith the LORD.

Babylon's irretrievable ruin reaffirmed. xiv. 23.

I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, 23

And pools of water ^a:

And I will sweep it with the besom of destruction,

Saith the LORD of hosts.

* * * *

A PROPHECY AGAINST ASSYRIA^b. xiv. 24-27.

The destruction of the Assyrians in Palestine meant the freedom of Judah. xiv. 24, 25.

The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, 24

^a Marshes caused by the overflow of the Euphrates when the dykes and canals had been destroyed.

^b This passage is clearly out of place here, and is probably a fragment of a prophecy of Isaiah connected with the invasion of Sennacherib 705 B. C.

¹ Or, As the
raiment of
those that
are slain

^{† 2} Or,
a place of
slaughter

Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass ;
 And as I have purposed, so shall it stand :
 25 That I will break the Assyrian in my land,
 And upon my mountains tread him under foot :
 Then shall his yoke depart from off them,
 And his burden depart from off their shoulder ^a.

The event would affect the whole world. xiv. 26, 27.

26 This is the purpose that is purposed upon the
 whole earth :
 And this is the hand that is stretched out upon
 all the nations.
 27 For the LORD of hosts hath purposed,
 And who shall disannul it ?
 And his hand is stretched out,
 And who shall turn it back ^b ?

* * * *

II. PHILISTIA. xiv. 28-32.

THE PROPHET'S ANSWER TO THE MESSENGERS
 OF THE NATIONS. Circa 727 or 705 B.C.

The superscription. xiv. 28.

28 In the year that king Ahaz died was this ¹burden ^c. ¹Or, oracle†
A new danger threatened Philistia. xiv. 29-31.

29 Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of thee,
 Because the rod that smote thee is broken :
 For out of the serpent's root shall come forth a
²basilisk, ²Or, adder
 And his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.
 30 And the firstborn of the poor ^d shall feed,
 And the needy shall lie down in safety :
 And I will kill thy root with famine,
 And thy remnant shall be slain.
 31 Howl, O gate ; cry, O city ;
 Thou art melted away, O Philistia, all of thee ; ³Or, there
 For there cometh a smoke out of the north, ^{is no strag-}
 And ^enone standeth aloof at his appointed times. ^{gler in his}
^{ranks†}

^a Cf. x. 27.

^b Cf. v. 25 ; ix. 12, &c. Jehovah's hand which had been stretched out against Judah would now be stretched out against their adversaries.

^c This editorial note was added probably on the supposition that the serpent is Ahaz, the basilisk Hezekiah. But Assyria rather than Judah was the great power that Philistia had to fear. She had no reason to rejoice in the death of Sargon ; she would find a worse foe in Sennacherib. Others refer it to the death of Shalmaneser and the accession of Sargon.

^d This is an expression for 'the poorest of the poor'. The Israelites would be released from the grip of the Assyrian.

The prophet's advice to the messengers. xiv. 32.

What then shall one answer the messengers of the 32
nation?

That the LORD hath founded Zion,
And in her shall the afflicted of his people
take refuge^a.

III. MOAB. xv, xvi.

(In its present form, circa 711 B.C.)

(1) *AN ANCIENT ORACLE AGAINST MOAB*^b.
xv—xvi. 12.

Two of Moab's cities suddenly captured. xv. 1.

^{†1} Or, *oracle*
concerning
² Or, *in the*
night

The ¹burden of Moab.

15

For ²in a night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and
brought to nought;

For ²in a night Kir of Moab is laid waste, and
brought to nought.

Her wail of distress and flight. xv. 2—8.

³ Or, *Bayith*
and Dibon
are gone up
to the high
places

³ He is gone up to ⁴Bayith^c, and to Dibon, to the 2
high places, to weep:

Moab howleth ⁴over Nebo, and ⁵over Medeba:

On all their heads is baldness,

Every beard is cut off.

⁴ Or, *the*
temple

^{†5} Or, *upon*

In their streets they gird themselves with sackcloth: 3
On their housetops, and in their broad places, every
one howleth,

Weeping abundantly.

And Heshbon crieth out, and Elealeh;

4

Their voice is heard even unto Jahaz:

^a This may mean either (1) that Isaiah here advises a refusal to actual ambassadors of the Philistines inviting Judah to join in an alliance against Assyria, on the ground that Judah may rest confident in Jehovah's protection; or (2) that Isaiah conceives of messengers from the nations generally, sent to know how Israel had fared after the Assyrian campaign. On the whole the latter best suits the expression 'of the nation.'

^b This old oracle, reproduced by Isaiah (see xvi. 13), is also employed in Jer. xlviii.

^c Bayith = house, i. e. temple (cf. 1 Kings iii. 2); but as in this sense the shortened Beth was the prefix of several town-names of Moab (see below), just as it was of several in Palestine, one of these may be here intended. Dibon has become celebrated as the place where the famous Moabite stone was discovered in 1868. The inscription by Mesha, king of Moab in Ahab's reign (2 Kings iii. 4), mentions, besides Dibon itself, Nebo, Medeba, Horonaim, Beth-bamoth, Beth-diblathaim, and Beth-baal-meon. Heshbon was once the capital of the Amorites (see Num. xxi. 25, 26). Elealeh, according to Conder, was about a mile from it. Most of the names which follow cannot be certainly identified, but the position of Zoar, probably south-east of the Dead Sea, would imply that the flight is in a southerly direction.

Therefore the armed men of Moab cry aloud ;
His soul trembleth within him.

- 5 My heart crieth out for Moab ;
Her ¹ nobles *flee* unto Zoar, ² to Eglath-shelishiyah ^a : ¹ Or, as otherwise read, *fugitives*
For by the ascent of Luhith with weeping they go up ;
For in the way of Horonaim they raise up a cry ² Or, as an heifer of three years old
of destruction.
- 6 For the waters of Nimrim ^b shall be ³ desolate : ³ Heb. desolations.
For the grass is withered away,
The tender grass faileth,
There is no green thing.

- 7 Therefore the abundance they have gotten,
And that which they have laid up,
Shall they carry away ⁴ to the brook of the willows. ⁴ Or, over†
- 8 For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab ;
The howling thereof unto Eglaim,
And the howling thereof unto Beer-elim.

Her complete annihilation. xv. 9.

- 9 For the waters of Dimon ^c are full of blood :
For I will bring yet more upon Dimon,
A lion upon him that escapeth of Moab,
And upon the remnant of the land.

The fugitives, following the prophet's advice, seek the protection of Judah. xvi. 1-5.

- 16 ⁵ Send ye the lambs for the ruler of the land ^d
From ⁶ Sela ⁷ which is toward the wilderness,
Unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.
⁵ See 2 Kings iii. 1.
⁶ Or, *Petra*
⁷ Or, *to*
- 2 For it shall be that, as wandering birds,
As a scattered nest,

^a Probably the name of a town. The other rendering, 'a heifer of three years old', is sometimes referred to the town, sometimes to Moab itself (R.V. marg.), in the sense of 'unused to the yoke', 'unconquered'. Possibly it may be merely a punning reference to Eglaim. Cf. Dimon below.

^b Not a natural drought, but the effect of the enemy cutting off the water-supply. Cf. 2 Kings iii. 25.

^c Dimon is probably another name for Dibon in ver. 2, here changed for the sake of assonance with the Hebrew word *dam* (blood). By the lion is meant some great conqueror, possibly Tiglath-Pileser III.

^d The Moabite fugitives are advised by the prophet to seek the friendship of Judah by voluntary payment of tribute, of which lambs were part. Cf. 2 Kings iii. 4.

So shall the daughters of Moab^a be
At the fords of Arnon.

Give counsel^b, 3
Execute judgement;

Make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the
noonday:

Hide the outcasts;
Bewray not the wanderer.

¹ Let mine outcasts dwell with thee; 4
As for Moab, be thou a covert to him
From the face of the spoiler:

†¹ Accord-
ing to
many
ancient
versions.

*Let the
outcasts of
Moab dwell
with thee;
be thou &c.*

² Or,
extortion
³ Heb. *The
treaders
down.*

For ² the extortioner is brought to nought^c,
Spoiling ceaseth,

³ The oppressors are consumed out of the land. 5
And a throne shall be established in mercy,
And one shall sit thereon in truth, in the tent of
David;

Judging, and seeking judgement,
And swift to do righteousness.

*The pride of Moab must be punished by the ruin of her
vineyards. xvi. 6-8.*

We have heard of the pride of Moab^d, 6
That he is very proud;

Even of his arrogancy, and his pride, and his
wrath;

His boastings are nought.

Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, 7
Every one shall howl:

* Or,
foundations

For the ⁴ raisin-cakes of Kir-hareseth^e shall ye
mourn,

Utterly stricken.

For the fields of Heshbon languish, 8
And the vine of Sibmah;

^a Daughters of Moab, i.e. inhabitants of different Moabite towns. Cf. daughter of Zion, 1, 8, &c.

^b The Moabite messengers follow the prophet's advice and ask for shelter from the spoiler.

^c 4 b-5. It is uncertain whether this Messianic description of Judah is put into the mouth of the Moabite messengers as a ground for their request, or as a parenthetical reflection of the prophet.

^d This may possibly express the answer of Judah, but it is more natural to take it as the present difficulty felt by the prophet to the realisation of his hopes for Moab.

^e These phrases express the extensiveness of her vineyards; the towns mentioned were famous for their vines.

¹ The lords of the nations

Have broken down the choice plants thereof;

They reached even unto Jazer,

They wandered into the wilderness;

Her branches were spread abroad,

They passed over the sea.

¹ Or, *Her choice plants did break down the lords of nations*

The prophet's sympathy with Moab. xvi. 9-11.

9 Therefore I will weep with the weeping of Jazer^a

For the vine of Sibmah:

I will water thee with my tears,

O Heshbon, and Elealeh:

For upon thy summer fruits and upon thy harvest

The *battle* shout^b is fallen.

10 And gladness is taken away,
And joy out of the fruitful field;
And in the vineyards there shall be no singing,
Neither joyful noise:

No treader shall tread out wine in the presses;

I have made the *vintage* shout to cease.

11 Wherefore my bowels sound like an harp for Moab,
And mine inward parts for Kir-heres^c.

In vain Moab supplicates at her high places. xvi. 12.

12 And it shall come to pass, when Moab presenteth himself,
When he wearieth himself upon the high place,
And shall come to his sanctuary to pray,
That he shall not prevail.

(2) *ISAIAH SOLEMNLY AFFIRMS THE SPEEDY FILMENT OF THIS EARLY PROPHECY.* xvi. 13, 14.

13 This is the word that the LORD spake concerning
14 Moab in time past^d. But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling^e, and the glory of Moab shall be brought

^a I will make the weeping of Jazer mine.

^b The Hebrew word for 'shout' in verses 9 and 10 is intentionally ambiguous. R.V. gives the true sense, but destroys the play on the word. Cf. Jer. xlviii. 33.

^c Probably the Kir of xv. 1 and the Kir-hareseth of xvi. 7.

^d It is impossible to say when and by whom this ancient prophecy was delivered.

^e A hireling does not serve for a moment longer than the time fixed. We do not know whether Isaiah anticipated that Sargon or Sennacherib would be the punisher of Moab.

into contempt, with all his great multitude ; and the remnant shall be very small and of no account.

IV. SYRIA AND ISRAEL. xvii. 1-11.

(Circa 734 B. C.)

The impending ruin of Damascus and Israel. xvii. 1-3.

† ¹ Or,
oracle
concerning

The ¹ burden of Damascus.

17

Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city,
And it shall be a ruinous heap.

The cities of Aroer^a are forsaken :

2

They shall be for flocks,

Which shall lie down, and none shall make them
afraid.

The fortress^b also shall cease from Ephraim,

3

And the kingdom² from Damascus,

And the remnant of Syria ;

† ² Or, from
Damascus ;
and the
remnant
of Syria
shall &c.

They shall be as the glory of the children of Israel^c,
Saith the LORD of hosts.

A mere fraction of Israel left. xvii. 4-6.

And it shall come to pass in that day,

4

That the glory of Jacob shall be made thin,

And the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.

And it shall be as when the harvestman gather-
eth the standing corn,

And his arm reapeth the ears ;

Yea, it shall be as when one gleaneth ears

In the valley of Rephaim^d.

Yet there shall be left therein gleanings,

6

As the³ shaking of an olive tree,

† ³ Heb.
beating.

Two or three berries in the top of the uppermost
bough,

Four or five in the outmost branches of a fruitful
tree,

Saith the LORD, the God of Israel.

^a i.e. the two cities called Aroer, one in the tribe of Reuben and the other in that of Gad, perhaps put generally for cities on the east side of Jordan, would first be taken by Tiglath-Pileser.

^b Cf. 2 Kings xv. 29. Isaiah anticipated the entire conquest of Israel at this time, which was finally carried out by Shalmaneser and Sargon. 2 Kings xviii. 9, 10.

^c Syria and Israel, glorious as they had been, would both alike perish.

^d An upland plain near Jerusalem and Bethlehem, famous as the scene of encounters between David and the Philistines (2 Sam. v. 18, 22). Corn, olives, and mulberry trees grew (and still grow) here in abundance.

In his despair man turns to God. xvii. 7, 8.

7 In that day shall a man look unto his Maker,
And his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of
Israel.

8 And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his
hands,
Neither shall he have respect to that which his
fingers have made,

Either the ¹Asherim ^a, or the sun-images.

¹ See
Ex. xxxiv. 13.

Israel forsaken because of her rejection of God.

xvii. 9-11.

9 In that day shall his strong cities

Be as the forsaken places ²in the wood and on ²the Sept.
the mountain top ^b, reads, *of the*

Which were forsaken from before the children of
Israel:

*Amorites
and the
Hivites.*

And it shall be a desolation.

10 For thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation,
And hast not been mindful of the rock of thy
³strength;

Therefore thou plantest ⁴pleasant plants,

And settest it with ⁵strange slips ^c:

³ Or,
strong hold

⁴ Or,
*plantings
of Adonis*

11 In the day of thy planting thou hedgest it in,
And in the morning thou makest thy seed to
blossom:

⁵ Or, *wine
slips of a
strange god*

But the harvest ⁶fleeth away in the day of grief

And of desperate sorrow.

⁶ Or, *shall
be a heap*

V. THE ASSYRIAN COLLAPSE. xvii. 12—xviii.

(1) *THE IMPENDING OVERTHROW.* xvii. 12-14.

The raging hordes dispersed. xvii. 12, 13.

12 Ah, the ⁷uproar of many peoples ^d,

Which roar like the roaring of the seas;

⁷ Or,
multitude

^a The Asherah was a sacred pole or tree-image which stood by the altar in a Canaanitish sanctuary. It probably symbolised fertility, and is frequently represented on ancient oriental seal-cylinders. See 2 Kings xxiii. 6.

^b The ruins of Canaanitish cities were naturally left in the forests and mountain tops, where the Canaanites could not use their chariots. See Josh. xvii. 16; Judg. i. 19; 1 Kings xx. 23-25.

^c In allusion chiefly to idolatrous rites, but possibly also to the alliance with Damascus, which directly brought about the Assyrian invasion.

^d 'Isaiah on his "watch-tower" hears, and we seem to hear with him, the ocean-like roar of the advancing Assyrian hosts' (Cheyne). The period is about 704 B.C. If this magnificent description of the approach and dispersion of the Assyrian army did not originally form part of the prophecy of ch. xviii, at any rate it forms a suitable prelude to it.

And the rushing of nations,

That rush like the rushing of mighty waters !

The nations shall rush like the rushing of many ¹³ waters :

¹ Heb. *him*.

² Heb. *he*.

But he shall rebuke ¹ them, and ² they shall flee far off,

And shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind,

And like the whirling dust before the storm.

The ruin sudden and complete. xvii. 14.

At eventide behold terror ;

14

³ Heb. *he is*.

And before the morning ³ they are not.

This is the portion of them that spoil us,

And the lot of them that rob us.

(2) *THE EFFECT OF ASSYRIA'S OVERTHROW UPON ETHIOPIA*^a. xviii.

Prologue: The Ethiopian embassy bidden to return to their masters. xviii. 1, 2.

⁴ Or, *shadowing with wings*

⁵ Heb. *Cush*.

⁶ Or, *And*

⁷ Or, *dragged away and peeled*

⁸ Or, *meted out and trodden down*

Heb. *offline, line, and of treading down*.

⁹ Or, *have spoiled*

Ah, the land ⁴ of the rustling of wings ^b,
Which is beyond the rivers of ⁵ Ethiopia :

18

That sendeth ambassadors by the sea ^c,

2

⁶ Even in vessels of papyrus upon the waters,
Saying^d, Go, ye swift messengers,

To a nation ⁷ tall and smooth ^e,

To a people terrible from their beginning onward ;

A nation ⁸ that meteth out and treadeth down ^f,
Whose land the rivers ⁹ divide !

The whole world summoned to witness the great catastrophe. xviii. 3.

All ye inhabitants of the world,

3

And ye dwellers on the earth,

When an ensign is lifted up on the mountains,
see ye ;

And when the trumpet is blown, hear ye.

^a This chapter is intended to enforce, by a highly dramatic representation, the importance to Israel of Assyria's overthrow. So distant and powerful a nation as Ethiopia would do them homage.

^b Ethiopia is called the 'land of buzzing wings', if that is the right interpretation of a very doubtful phrase, from the flies which infest the Nile and other rivers. The Ethiopian heralds go, probably to seek allies, and hear of the catastrophe.

^c i. e. the Nile. Cf. xix. 5 ; Nah. iii. 8.

^d 'Saying', a very misleading interpolation. The prophet sends the messengers back.

^e The tall bronze-like Ethiopians must have impressed the Jews.

^f i. e. strong and victorious.

Assyria's plans suddenly turned to ruin. xviii. 4-6.

- 4 For thus hath the LORD said unto me,
 I will be still,
 And I will behold in my dwelling place ;
¹ Like clear heat in sunshine ^a, ¹ Or, *When there is*
 Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.
- 5 For afore the harvest, when the blossom is over,
 And the flower becometh a ripening grape,
 He shall cut off the sprigs with pruninghooks,
 And the spreading branches shall he take away
and cut down.
- 6 They shall be left together
 Unto the ravenous birds of the mountains,
 And to the beasts of the earth :
 And the ravenous birds shall summer upon them,
 And all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon
 them ^b.

Epilogue: Ethiopia will do homage at Zion. xviii. 7.

- 7 In that time shall a present be brought unto the
 LORD of hosts
 Of a people ² tall and smooth, ² See ver. 2.
 And from a people terrible from their beginning
 onward ;
 A nation that meteth out and treadeth down,
 Whose land the rivers divide,
 To the place of the name of the LORD of hosts,
 The mount Zion.

VI. EGYPT. xix. 1-25.

(720, or 711, or 702 B.C.).

(1) *HER PRESENT PROSPECT OF RUIN AND DECAY.* xix. 1-17.

*Religious and social collapse, ending in anarchy and
 cruel despotism.* xix. 1-4.

- 19 The ³ burden of Egypt.
 Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud,
 And cometh unto Egypt : ³ Or,
*oracle concern-
 ing* †
 And the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his
 presence,

^a Just as the glowing heat of the sunshine by day and the heavy dew during the night do their steady work in ripening the harvest, so does God, apparently inactive, allow the Assyrian plans to ripen fast. At the critical moment, just when the plans were maturing, the Assyrian army would be suddenly cut off.

^b i.e. the birds and the beasts of prey will not leave them till they have completely finished their work.

And the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.

¹ Or, *join together*
Or, *arm*

And I will ¹ stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians :

And they shall fight every one against his brother,
And every one against his neighbour ;

City against city,

And kingdom against kingdom.

And the spirit of Egypt shall be made void in the midst of it ;

² Heb.
swallow up.

And I will ² destroy the counsel thereof :

And they shall seek unto the idols, and to the ³ charmers,

³ Or,
whisperers

And to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.

[†] ¹ Or,
shut up

And I will ⁴ give over the Egyptians into the hand ⁴ of a cruel lord ;

And a fierce king shall rule over them,

Saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

Drought and consequent industrial failure. xix. 5-10.

And the waters shall fail from the sea, 5

And the river shall be wasted and become dry.

And the rivers shall stink ; 6

⁵ Or, *canals*

The ⁵ streams of ⁶ Egypt shall be minished and dried up :

⁶ Heb.
Mazor.

The reeds and flags shall wither away.

The meadows by the Nile, 7

By the brink of the Nile,

And all that is sown by the Nile,

Shall become dry, be driven away ^a, and be no more.

The fishers also shall lament, 8

And all they that cast angle into the Nile shall mourn,

And they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish.

Moreover they that work in combed flax, 9

[†] Or, *cotton*

And they that weave ⁷ white cloth,

Shall be ashamed.

⁸ Or,
foundations

And her ⁸ pillars ^b shall be broken in pieces, 10

⁹ Or, *that make dams*

All they ⁹ that work for hire *shall be* grieved in soul.

^a i.e. scattered with the wind.

^b The most influential in the community. The misfortune affects all classes alike.

The helplessness of her counsellors. xix. 11-15.

11 The princes of Zoan^a are utterly foolish ;
The counsel of the wisest counsellors of Pharaoh
is become brutish :

How say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise,
The son of ancient kings ?

12 Where then are thy wise men ?
And let them tell thee now^b ;
And let them know what the LORD of hosts hath
purposed concerning Egypt.

13 The princes of Zoan are become fools,
The princes of ¹ Noph^c are deceived ;
They have caused Egypt to go astray,
That are the corner stone of her tribes.

¹ Or,
Memphis

14 The LORD hath mingled a spirit of perverseness
in the midst of her :
And they have caused Egypt to go astray in every
work thereof,

As a drunken man ² staggereth in his vomit.

² Or,
goeth
astray†

15 Neither shall there be for Egypt any work,
Which head or tail, palm-branch or rush^d, may do.

Her terror of Jehovah and His people. xix. 16, 17.

16 In that day shall Egypt be like unto women :
And it shall tremble and fear
Because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD
of hosts,

Which he shaketh over it.

17 And the land of Judah shall become a terror unto
Egypt,

³ Every one to whom mention is made thereof³ Or, Every
shall be afraid, one that
maketh

Because of the purpose of the LORD of hosts,
Which he purposeth against it.

mention
thereof, to
him shall
they turn
in fear

(2) *HER FUTURE ALLIANCE WITH JUDAH, CON-
VERSION AND PROSPERITY.* xix. 18-25.

*Her gradual union in the language and worship of
Jehovah.* xix. 18-22.

18 In that day there shall be five cities in the land of
Egypt

^a i.e. Tanis, in or near what was known as the land of Goshen, one of the
most ancient and famous of the cities of Egypt.

^b 'now', not temporal, but merely strengthening the verb.

^c Memphis was the famous capital of Lower Egypt from earliest days. Its site
is near the Sakhara pyramids, not far from Cairo, and is now being excavated.

^d Probably a proverbial expression for 'all classes.' Cf. ix. 14. The point
is the utter helplessness to which the impotence of their rulers had reduced them.

That speak the language of Canaan,
And swear to the LORD of hosts ;
One shall be called The city of ¹destruction ^a.

†¹ Or, *Heres*
Or, accord-
ing to
another
reading, *the*
sun

In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in ¹⁹
the midst of the land of Egypt,

And a pillar ^b at the border thereof to the
LORD.

And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto ²⁰
the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt :

For they shall cry unto the LORD because of the
oppressors,

² Or, *a*
mighty one

And he shall send them a saviour, and ²a defender,
And he shall deliver them.

†³ Or,
make him-
self known

And the LORD shall ³be known to Egypt, 21
And the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that
day ;

Yea, they shall worship with sacrifice and oblation,
And shall vow a vow unto the LORD,
And shall perform it.

And the LORD shall smite Egypt, 22
Smiting and healing ;

And they shall return unto the LORD,
And he shall be intreated of them,
And shall heal them.

*Egypt and Assyria incorporated with Israel as the
people of God. xix. 23-25.*

In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt ²³
to Assyria,

And the Assyrian shall come into Egypt,
And the Egyptian into Assyria ;

^a There is probably either a punning or a direct allusion to Heliopolis ('the sun-city'), the On of Genesis, famed for its sun-worship. It was, perhaps, Egypt's most ancient city, and its site, which is close to Cairo, is marked by an obelisk dating from 2500 B.C. If we read Heres, 'destruction,' it is understood to mean that in it would be the *destruction* of sun-worship. But Cheres ('sun'), hardly distinguishable from Heres in Hebrew, seems the more probable word. It was on the ground of this prophecy, particularly ver. 19, that the famous Jewish temple was built by Onias IV in the Heliopolitan Leontopolis, 160 B.C. In the recently discovered Aramaic papyri of Elephantinê we have an earlier fulfilment of Isaiah's prediction in the temple of Yahu at that place, which had been built, at any rate before the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses (525 B.C.), and was spared by him, though he destroyed all the temples of the gods of Egypt. (See Prof. Sachau's *Drei Aramäische Papyrus-unkunden aus Elephantine*, Berlin, 1907, to which reference is made in an article by Dr. Driver in the *Guardian*, Nov. 6, 1907, p. 1827.)

^b Pillars were an ancient symbol of Israelitish, as probably of all Semitic worship. They were finally discarded by the Deuteronomic code. See Deut. xii. 3.

And the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians.

24 In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria,

A blessing in the midst of the earth :

25 For that the LORD of hosts hath blessed them, saying,

Blessed be Egypt my people,

And Assyria the work of my hands,

And Israel mine inheritance ^a.

*

*

*

A SYMBOLICAL PROPHECY DIRECTED AGAINST AN EGYPTIAN ALLIANCE. xx.

(Circa 711 B.C.)

For three years the prophet dresses as a captive.

xx. 1, 2.

20 In the year that ¹Tartan came unto Ashdod, when ¹The title of Sargon ^b the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought ²against Ashdod and took it; at that time the LORD ²in chief. [†] spake by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go, and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins ^c, and put thy shoe from off thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

A sign that Assyria would conquer Egypt and Ethiopia.

xx. 3, 4.

3 And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot ²three years for a sign and ²Or, to be 4 a wonder upon Egypt and upon ³Ethiopia; so shall ³for three the king of Assyria lead away the captives of Egypt, ³years a sign [†] and the exiles of Ethiopia, young and old, naked, ³Heb. Cush. and barefoot, and with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.

The effect that such a conquest would have on Judah.

xx. 5, 6.

5 And they shall be dismayed and ashamed, because of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.
6 And the inhabitant of this coastland shall say in that

^a All the kingdoms would equally belong to Jehovah.

^b Sargon, Shalmaneser's successor, one of the greatest warriors of Assyria, is only mentioned here in the O.T. From his great Khorsabad inscription, we gather that the capture of Ashdod took place in 711 B.C.

^c i.e. the prophet's ordinary official dress of hair-cloth. Cf. 2 Kings i. 8; Zech. xiii. 4.

day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we fled
for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria :
and we, how shall we escape ?

* * * *

VII. BABYLON^a. xxi. 1-10.

(Circa 710 B.C.)

*The prophet's agitation at his vision of the siege of
Babylon. xxi. 1-4.*

¹ Or, *oracle concerning* The ¹burden of the wilderness of the sea^b.

21

As whirlwinds in the South sweep through,
It cometh from the wilderness,
From a terrible land.

² Or, *hard*

A ²grievous vision is declared unto me ;
The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously,
And the spoiler spoileth.

2

Go up, O Elam ;
Besiege, O Media^c ;

³ Or, *will I make*

All the sighing thereof³ have I made to cease.

Therefore are my loins filled with anguish^d ;

3

Pangs have taken hold upon me,
As the pangs of a woman in travail :

⁴ Heb. *bent*.

I am ⁴pained so that I cannot hear ;
I am dismayed so that I cannot see.

⁵ Heb. *wandereth*.

My heart⁵ panteth,
Horror hath affrighted me :

4

The twilight that I desired hath been turned into
trembling unto me.

The Babylonian carouse suddenly disturbed. xxi. 5.

They prepare the table^e,

5

^a This prophecy, in its title and vigorous dramatic style so closely resembling the other burdens of Isaiah, probably refers to a siege of Babylon and its ruler Merodach Baladan by Sargon in 710 B.C. (See Cheyne *in loco*.) The contrast between Isaiah's sympathy with Babylon's fate here and a later prophet's scornful tone of triumph in ch. xiv is very striking.

^b An enigmatic heading; the wilderness of the sea may mean the Syrian desert between Babylonia and Palestine, or else the low-lying land between Babylonia and Elam across which the hostile hosts came to conquer Babylon.

^c The prophet invites these peoples to attack. On the relations of Elam and Merodach to each other, see Cheyne.

^d The relations between Israel and Merodach-Baladan were friendly in Isaiah's time, though at a later date he denounced a possible alliance. See ch. xxxix.

^e This verse has very naturally been referred to Belshazzar's feast as narrated in Dan. v, but such incidents are frequent in history. Cf. xxii. 13. We may compare also the revelry before the battle of Hastings, and the famous ball at Brussels before the battle of Waterloo. Here it may be merely a piece of poetic colouring.

They ¹ set the watch,
 They eat, they drink :
 Rise up ^a, ye princes, anoint the shield ^b.

¹ Or,
*spread the
 carpets†*

Babylon's fate announced to the prophet. xxi. 6-10.

6 For thus hath the Lord said unto me,

Go, set a watchman ^c;
 Let him declare what he seeth :

7 ² And when he seeth ³ a troop,

⁴ Horsemen in pairs,

⁵ A troop of asses,

⁶ A troop of camels,

He shall hearken diligently with much heed ^d.

² Or, *And
 he saw . . .
 and he
 hearkened*

³ Or,
*A chariot
 Or, Chariots*

⁴ Or, *A pair
 of horsemen*

8 And he cried as a lion :

O Lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower
 in the day-time,

And am set in my ward ^e whole nights :

9 And, behold, here ⁶ cometh a troop of men,

⁴ Horsemen in pairs.

And he answered and said,

Babylon is fallen, is fallen ;

And all the graven images of her gods are
 broken unto the ground.

⁵ Or, *every
 night*

⁶ Or, *come
 chariots of
 men*

10 O thou my threshing, and the ⁷ corn of my floor ^e : that ⁷ Heb. *son*.
 which I have heard from the LORD of hosts, the God
 of Israel, have I declared unto you.

VIII. EDMOM. xxi. 11, 12.

(Circa 710 B. C.?)

The anxious inquiry: Is the distress nearly over?

xxi. 11.

11 The ⁸ burden of Dumah ^f.

⁸ Or, *oracle
 concerning*

One calleth unto me out of Seir ^g,

^a A sudden cry of alarm or an imaginary warning by the prophet.

^b Shields, made usually of leather, were probably oiled, partly to protect them
 from the weather and partly to cause the strokes to glide off. Cf. 2 Sam. i. 21.

^c Prophets are frequently compared to watchmen. (Cf. Jer. vi. 17; Ezek.
 ii. 17; xxxiii. 7; Hab. ii. 1.) Here the watchman is by a striking poetical
 figure described as *placed by* the prophet, and the dialogue is carried on between
 his watchman (who is really the prophet's inner self) and God.

^d The prophet sees the vision of the invading army, but cannot at first
 rather its true significance.

^e Israel threshed and crushed by Babylonian tyranny. Cf. Mic. iv. 13;
 sa. xli. 15.

^f Dumah, 'silence', obviously a play on the word Edom.

^g An Edomite is poetically represented as questioning the prophet. Cf. ver.
 , where the word 'watchman' is different but practically synonymous.

+¹ Or, *what*
hour

Watchman, ¹ what of the night?
Watchman, ¹ what of the night?

The answer: Brightness but also trouble. xxi. 12.

The watchman said,

² Or, *is come*

The morning ² cometh, and also the night:
If ye will inquire, inquire ye:

+³ Or, *Come*
ye again

³ Turn ye, come ^a.

IX. ARABIA. xxi. 13-17.

(Circa 710 B.C.?)

*Trading caravans, compelled by war to hide themselves,
are hospitably succoured by their neighbours.*

xxi. 13-15.

⁴ Or, *oracle* The ⁴ burden upon Arabia ^b.

+⁵ Or,
thickets
⁶ Or, Ac-
cording to
the ancient
versions,
at evening

In the ⁵ forest ⁶ in Arabia shall ye lodge,
O ye travelling companies of Dedanites ^c.

⁷ Or, *is*
thirsty
bring ye

Unto him that ⁷ was thirsty they brought water;

⁸ Or, as
otherwise
read, *Ye in-*
habitants of
the land of
Tema, meet

⁸ The inhabitants of the land of Tema ^d
Did meet the fugitives with their bread.

For they fled away from the swords,

From the drawn sword,

And from the bent bow,

And from the grievousness of war.

Disaster will speedily overtake the tribes. xxi. 16, 17.

For thus hath the Lord said unto me,

Within a year, according to the years of an
hireling,

And all the glory of Kedar ^e shall fail:

And the residue of the number of the archers,

The mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall
be few:

For the LORD, the God of Israel, hath spoken it.

^a The answer, perhaps designedly obscure, probably means that a morning of prosperity will follow, only to be succeeded by a night of gloom; but let Edom inquire again, when God's purpose may be clearer to the prophet. So R.V. margin. The text would imply that Edom must expect salvation through conversion.

^b The prophecy describes some nomadic tribes as flying from the enemy through Arabia. As frequently, the prophet first draws a picture and then explains its bearing in the form of a direct prediction (ver. 16, 17.) Temanites offered to the fugitives the hospitality which an Arab to the present day never refuses.

^c An important trading Arab tribe which led a roving, unsettled life.

^d A prominent trading town in the north of Arabia.

^e Kedar here put generally for the Arabian tribes who are the subject of this prophecy. Cf. Cant. i. 5; Ps. cxx. 5.

X. JERUSALEM DURING A SIEGE ^a.

xxii. 1-14.

Exultant hopes end in disastrous defeat. xxii. 1-3.22 The ¹ burden of the valley of vision ^b.¹ Or, *oracle concerning*

What aileth thee now,
That thou art wholly gone up to the housetops ^c?

2 O thou that art full of shoutings,
A tumultuous city,

A joyous town;
Thy slain are not slain with the sword ^d,
Neither are they dead in battle.

3 All thy rulers fled away together,
They were bound ² by the archers ^e:

All that were found of thee were bound together, ² Or, *without the bow†*

³ They fled afar off.

³ Or, *Which had fled from far**The prophet's inconsolable grief and shame.* xxii. 4.

4 Therefore said I,

Look away from me,

I will weep bitterly;

⁴ Labour not to comfort me,

⁴ Or, *Hasten*

For the spoiling of the daughter of my people.

The enemy invest the city. xxii. 5-7.5 For it is a day of discomfiture, and of treading down, and of perplexity ^f,

From the Lord, the LORD of hosts,

In the valley of vision;

A breaking down of the walls,

And a crying to the ⁵ mountains.

⁵ Or, *mountain*6 And Elam ^g bare the quiver,

With ⁶ chariots of men *and* horsemen;

⁶ Or, *troops†*

And Kir uncovered the shield.

7 And it came to pass, that thy choicest valleys were full of chariots,

And the horsemen set themselves in array at the gate.

^a This prophecy probably refers to a siege of Jerusalem implied perhaps in 2 Kings xviii. 14, and more distinctly mentioned in an inscription of Sennacherib in which he speaks of 'shutting up Hezekiah like a bird in a cage.'

^b i.e. Jerusalem the centre of prophetic vision, with a possible reference to the low-lying home of Isaiah. (See Introduction, p. 57.)

^c i.e. in order to see the distant enemy. Relying probably on the promised Egyptian aid, they look forward eagerly to the combat.

^d They die not like soldiers, but are stabbed afterwards as prisoners.

^e The enemy needed not to draw the bow, the Jews were so utterly helpless.

^f This is the reason for Isaiah's grief.

^g The Elamites appear to have been allies of the Assyrians, whereas Kir was part of the Assyrian empire. See note on Amos i. 5.

Hasty measures of human defence taken, but Jehovah ignored. xxii. 8-11.

And he took away the covering^a of Judah ; 8
And thou didst look in that day to the armour in
the house of the forest^b.

And ye saw the breaches of the city of David, 9
that they were many :

And ye gathered together the waters of the lower
pool.

And ye numbered the houses of Jerusalem, 10
And ye brake down the houses to fortify the wall.

Ye made also a reservoir between the two walls 11
for the water of the old pool^c :

¹ Or, the
maker
thereof

But ye looked not unto¹ him that had done this,
Neither had ye respect unto him that fashioned it
long ago.

Their thoughtless revelry unpardonable. xxii. 12-14.

And in that day did the Lord, the LORD of hosts, call 12

To weeping, and to mourning,

And to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth :

And behold, joy and gladness, 13

Slaying oxen and killing sheep,

Eating flesh and drinking wine :

Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.

And the LORD of hosts revealed himself in mine ears, 14

^{† 2} Or, ^{expiated by} Surely this iniquity shall not be² purged from you till
ye die, saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

* * * *

THE DEPOSITION OF A HIGH OFFICER OF STATE DEMANDED. xxii. 15-25.

The ostentatious Shebna is to be banished. xxii. 15-19.

Thus saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, Go, get thee 15
unto this³ treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over
the house, and say,

^{† 3} Or,
steward

What doest thou here^d? 16

And whom hast thou here,

That thou hast hewed thee out here a sepulchre?

Hewing him out a sepulchre on high,

^a The mask which prevented them from seeing their real danger. But perhaps we should take the line with the previous verse in the sense that they were left defenceless.

^b The arsenal close to the temple. 1 Kings vii. 2, and x. 17.

^c The old pool is probably that of Siloam, the reservoir being for its overflow. See note on viii. 6.

^d Perhaps in allusion to his being a foreigner ; he had at least an Aramaic name.

Graving an habitation for himself in the rock !

17 Behold, the LORD will hurl thee away violently

¹ as a *strong* man ;

Yea, he will ² wrap thee up closely.

18 He will surely ³ turn and toss thee like a ball

Into a large country ;

There shalt thou die,

And there shall be the chariots of thy glory,

Thou shame of thy lord's house.

19 And I will thrust thee from thine office ^a,

And from thy station shall he pull thee down.

¹ Or, *O*
thou strong
man †

² Or, *lay*
fast hold
on thee †

³ Or, *wind*
thee round
and round
like a ball
and toss
thee †

Eliakim's instalment and honour. xxii. 20-23.

20 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That I will call my servant Eliakim the son of
Hilkiah :

21 And I will clothe him with thy robe,
And strengthen him with thy girdle,
And I will commit thy government into his hand :
And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of
Jerusalem,

And to the house of Judah.

22 And the key ^b of the house of David will I lay
upon his shoulder ;

And he shall open, and none shall shut ;

And he shall shut, and none shall open.

23 And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place ^c ;
And he shall be for a throne of glory to his
father's house.

His subsequent nepotism and disgrace. xxii. 24, 25.

24 And they shall hang upon him all the glory of
his father's house,
The offspring and the issue,
Every small vessel,
From the vessels of cups
Even to all the vessels of flagons.

25 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts,
Shall the nail that was fastened in a sure place
give way ;
And it shall be hewn down, and fall,

^a Here Jehovah is speaking directly.

^b The key of a door (about 9 or 10 inches long) was generally carried in the girdle, but sometimes it was slung over the shoulders. It is here a symbol of unlimited authority.

^c The figure is intended to imply security. A nail cannot easily be drawn out.

And the burden that was upon it shall be cut off;

For the LORD hath spoken it ^a.

* * * *

XI. PHŒNICIA. xxiii.

The miserable fate of Tyre is Jehovah's work.

xxiii. 1-14.

¹ Or, *oracle concerning* The ¹ burden of Tyre.

23

Howl, ye ships of Tarshish ^b;
For it is laid waste,
So that there is no house, no entering in:
From the land of Kittim ^c it is revealed to them.

[†] ² Or, *coastland*

Be still, ye inhabitants of the ² isle; 2
Thou whom the merchants of Zidon ^d, that pass
over the sea, have replenished.
And on great waters the seed of Shihor ^e, the ³
harvest of the Nile, was her revenue;
And she was the mart of nations.

Be thou ashamed, O Zidon:
For the sea hath spoken, the strong hold ^f of the 4
sea, saying,
I have not travailed, nor brought forth,
Neither have I nourished young men,
Nor brought up virgins.

³ Or, *As at the report concerning Egypt, so &c.*

[¶] When the report cometh to Egypt, 5
They shall be sorely pained at the report of Tyre ^g.

Pass ye over to Tarshish ^h; 6
Howl, ye inhabitants of the ² isle.

⁴ Or, *of ancient days? her own feet shall carry &c.*

Is this your joyous city, 7
Whose antiquity is ⁴ of ancient days,
Whose feet carried her afar off to sojourn ⁱ?

^a As it is strange that such a threat should have followed the previous promise, it is probable that ver. 24, 25 were added subsequently, when abuses in Eliakim's family became evident.

^b Here, literally, ships trading with Tartessus in Spain. See note on ii. 16.

^c i. e. Cyprus, where they learn the fate of Tyre.

^d Tyre and Zidon here stand for the whole coast of Phœnicia. Zidon was the older of the two, but less famous as a city.

^e Shihor is the Upper Nile. The corn grown on the Nile banks was conveyed to Tyre by sea, and then dispersed among the nations.

^f i. e. Tyre. Deprived of sons and daughters by war, she might as well have been barren.

[¶] Because their commercial prosperity depended on Tyre.

^h The inhabitants have to take refuge in the farthest colony of the west. See note on ver. 1.

ⁱ i. e. who made many distant colonies.

Go about the city,
Thou harlot that hast been forgotten ;
Make sweet melody,
Sing many songs,
That thou mayest be remembered.

And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy ¹⁷ years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall return to her hire ^a, and shall play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness ¹⁸ to the LORD : it shall not be treasured nor laid up ; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for ¹ durable clothing.

^{† 1} Or,
stately

Part V. Ch. xxiv—xxvi. (xxvii) ^b.

THE DIVINE JUDGEMENT OF THE WORLD AND THE
REDEMPTION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

I. THE OVERTHROW OF THE WORLD AND ITS CITY. xxiv.

The earth is utterly emptied and fades away.

xxiv. 1—5 a.

² Or, *land*
and so in
vv. 3, 4, &c.

Behold, the LORD maketh the ² earth empty ^c, **24**

And maketh it waste,

And turneth it upside down,

And scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

And it shall be, as with the people, so with the ² priest ^d ;

As with the servant, so with his master ;

As with the maid, so with her mistress ;

As with the buyer, so with the seller ;

As with the lender, so with the borrower ;

As with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

The earth shall be utterly emptied, **3**

And utterly spoiled ;

For the LORD hath spoken this word.

The earth mourneth and fadeth away, **4**

The world languisheth and fadeth away,

^a i.e. her commerce. She will coquet again with other nations. Her wealth would be given as tribute or as a voluntary offering to Jehovah's people.

^b The date is probably about the time of Alexander's capture of Tyre, 332 B. C., see Introduction, p. 60.

^c This emptying of the earth and fading away point metaphorically to the devastation of an enemy.

^d All classes, high and low. Assonance plays a large part in the Hebrew original of ver. 2 and 3.

- ¹ The lofty people of the earth do languish.
 5 The earth also is polluted under the inhabitants ^{¹ Or, *The high ones of the people*} thereof;

It is because of her iniquity. xxiv. 5b-6.

- Because they have transgressed the laws,
 Changed the ordinance,
 Broken the everlasting covenant.
 6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth,
 And they that dwell therein are found guilty :
 Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are
 burned,
 And few men left.

The nature of the catastrophe further described.

xxiv. 7-12.

- 7 The new wine mourneth ^a,
 The vine languisheth,
 All the merryhearted do sigh.
 8 The mirth of tabrets ceaseth,
 The noise of them that rejoice endeth,
 The joy of the harp ceaseth.
 9 They shall not drink wine with a song ;
 Strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.
 10 The city of ² confusion ^b is broken down : <sup>² Or, *wasteness*
See Gen. i. 2.†</sup>
 Every house is shut up, that no man may
 come in.
 11 There is a crying in the streets because of the
 wine ;
 All joy is darkened,
 The mirth of the land is ³ gone. ^{³ Heb. *gone into captivity.* †}
 12 In the city is left desolation,
 And the gate is smitten with destruction.

A saved remnant rejoice and praise God. xxiv. 13-15.

- 13 For thus shall it be in the midst of the earth among
 the peoples,
 As the ⁴ shaking of an olive tree, ^{⁴ Heb. *beating.* †}
 As the grape gleanings when the vintage is
 done ^c.
 14 These shall lift up their voice, they shall shout ;

^a Vineyards are destroyed by a devastating foe. Hence there is no wine and no feasts.

^b Either Babylon regarded as the world-city or put collectively for cities besieged and taken by the enemy. 'Confusion,' i. e. primitive chaos (Gen. i. 2), to which it was to be again reduced. See note on xxxiv. 5. Ver. 11, 12 repeat the thought of 8-10.

^c i. e. very few only would be left.

For the majesty of the LORD they cry aloud from the sea.

†¹ Or, *lights*
Or, *fires*

Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the ¹ east ^a, 15
Even the name of the LORD, the God of Israel,
in the ² isles of the sea.

†² Or,
coastlands

Their song reminds the prophet once more of the judgement which must first come on the evil world. xxiv. 16-20.

From the uttermost part of the earth have we ¹⁶
heard songs,

Glory to the righteous ^b.

³ Heb.
Leanness
to me.

But I said, ³ I pine away, I pine away,
Woe is me!

The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously ^c;
Yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very
treacherously.

Fear, and the pit, and the snare ^d, are upon ¹⁷
thee, O inhabitant of the earth.

And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from ¹⁸
the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit;

And he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit
shall be taken in the snare:

For the windows on high are opened ^e,

And the foundations of the earth do shake.

The earth is utterly broken, 19

The earth is clean dissolved,

The earth is moved exceedingly.

The earth shall stagger like a drunken man, 20

And shall be moved to and fro like a hut ^f;

And the transgression thereof shall be heavy
upon it,

And it shall fall, and not rise again.

^a The Hebrew has 'lights', i. e. east, and 'coastlands', i. e. west. It is a call to glorify God from east to west.

^b i. e. the righteous remnant, especially the Jews.

^c The assonance here and in ver. 17 is very remarkable. Gesenius translates *Raptores rapiunt et rapinam rapiunt raptores*. Lit.: Spoilers have spoiled, and a spoil spoilers have spoiled.

^d The three words, 'fear', 'pit', and 'snare', are closely alike, *pachadh* (dh = th as in 'the'), *pachath*, and *pach*. The point is the certainty of meeting one or other fate, it matters little which.

^e The sky in the Post-captivity period was apparently conceived of as a transparent hollow sphere, above which were the waters, kept from falling by windows. Cf. Gen. vii. 11; viii. 2. The specific calamities here described are storm and earthquake.

^f A rough temporary wooden structure. See note on i. 8.

*The visitation of all that is great, that Jehovah
alone may reign. XXIV. 21-23.*

- 21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD
shall ¹punish the host of the ²high ones on high ^a, ¹ Heb. *visit*
And the kings of the earth upon the earth ^b. *upon.*
- 22 And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners ² Heb.
are gathered in the ³ pit, *height. †*
And shall be shut up in the prison, ³ Or,
And after many days shall they be ⁴ visited. *dungeon*
- 23 Then the moon shall be confounded, ⁴ Or,
And the sun ashamed ^c; *punished †*
For the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, ⁵ Or,
and in Jerusalem, *before his*
And ⁵ before his ⁶ ancients gloriously ^d. *ancients*
⁶ Or, *shall be*
glory
elders †

II. THE GLORY OF THE REDEEMED AFTER THE PUNISHMENT OF THEIR ENEMIES.

XXV.

A thanksgiving. XXV. 1-5.

- 25 O LORD, thou art my God ;
I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name ;
For thou hast done wonderful things,
Even counsels of old,
In faithfulness *and* truth.
- 2 For thou hast made of a city^e an heap ;
Of a defenced city a ruin :
A palace of strangers to be no city ;
It shall never be built.
- 3 Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee,
The city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.
- 4 For thou hast been a strong hold to the poor,
A strong hold to the needy in his distress,
A refuge from the storm,
A shadow from the heat,
When the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm
against the wall.

^a Either the stars (cf. ver. 23), heaven being, as frequently elsewhere, joined in the general calamity of the earth, or, which better suits the parallelism, the angelic host.

^b Though probably the prophet had the king of Babylon principally in view, the kings of the world-powers are here included as the enemies of God's people.

^c Cf. ver. 21 ; the primary thought, however, appears to be that they would pale before the glory of Jehovah.

^d God is glorified in the presence of His elders, a body exercising important political functions both in the pre-exilic and the post-exilic periods.

^e Probably Babylon.

As the heat in a dry place 5
 Shalt thou bring down the noise of strangers ;
 As the heat by the shadow of a cloud ^a,
 The song of the terrible ones shall be brought
 low.

All nations invited to a banquet on mount Zion.

xxv. 6.

And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make 6
 unto all peoples
 A feast of fat things,
 A feast of wines on the lees,
 Of fat things full of marrow,
 Of wines on the lees well refined ^b.

Suffering, sorrow, and death are banished. xxv. 7, 8.

¹ Heb.
 swallow up.

And he will ¹ destroy in this mountain 7
 The face of the covering that is cast over all
 peoples,
 And the veil that is spread over all nations ^c.
 He hath swallowed up death for ever ; 8
 And the LORD GOD will wipe away tears from off
 all faces ;
 And the reproach ^d of his people shall he take
 away from off all the earth :
 For the LORD hath spoken it.

The joy of the redeemed in Jehovah. xxv. 9.

And it shall be said in that day, 9
 Lo, this is our God ;
 We have waited for him,
 And he will save us :
 This is the LORD ;
 We have waited for him,
 We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

While Zion is saved, proud Moab is humiliated.

xxv. 10-12.

For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest ^e, 10

^a As clouds check the rays of the sun, so will the fury of foes be restrained.

^b Wines which have been allowed to stand so long that the dregs may settle. In this verse there is a striking play on words and assonance.

^c Sorrow or death, or whatever else hides the light of Divine love, shall be removed. See Cheyne *in loco*.

^d The taunt of heathen nations.

^e The hand which protects Israel chastises Moab. Moab seems here mentioned as a type of the irreconcilable enemies of God and His people. See note on xxxiv. 1.

And Moab shall be trodden down in his place,

Even as straw is trodden down

¹ In the water of the dunghill.

11 And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst

² thereof,

As he that swimmeth spreadeth forth *his hands* to swim ^a:

³ And he shall lay low ⁴ his pride

⁵ Together with the craft of ⁴ his hands.

12 And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls

⁶ Hath he brought down,

Laid low, and brought to the ground,

Even to the dust.

¹ Another reading is, *In the dunghill.*

² Or, *of them*

³ Or, *But*

⁴ Or, *their*

⁵ Or, *For all the craft &*

⁶ Or, *Shall he bring down, lay low, and bring &c.*

III. THE SONG OF THE REDEEMED.

xxvi. 1-19.

GOD'S DEALINGS WITH THE NATION AND
THE WORLD COMPARED.

*The city of God and its citizens in contrast to the
city of the world.* xxvi. 1-6.

26 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of
Judah:

We have a strong city;

Salvation^b will he appoint for walls and bulwarks.

2 Open ye the gates^c,

That the righteous nation which keepeth truth
may enter in.

3 ⁷ Thou wilt keep *him*⁸ in perfect peace,

*Whose*⁹ mind is stayed on thee:

Because he trusteth in thee.

4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever:

For in ¹⁰ the LORD JEHOVAH is ¹¹ an everlasting
rock.

5 For he hath brought down them that dwell on ¹²
high,

The lofty city: he layeth it low,

He layeth it low even to the ground;

He bringeth it even to the dust.

6 The foot shall tread it down;

Even the feet of the poor^d,

And the steps of the needy.

⁷ Or, *A stedfast mind thou keepest in perfect peace, because it &c.†*

⁸ Heb. *peace, peace.*
⁹ Or, *imagination*

¹⁰ Heb. *Jah Jehovah.* †
See xii. 2.

¹¹ Or, *a rock of ages* †

^a He will try to escape in vain.

^b The salvation which Jehovah gives is stronger than outward protection.

^c The city is opened to receive the returning nation made righteous by discipline. The contrast is primarily between Babylon and Jerusalem.

^d The poor down-trodden nation would triumph over their former oppressors.

*By chastisement alone will the world learn
righteousness. xxvi. 7-11.*

† ¹ Or, a
right way;
the path of
the just thou
directest
aright

² Or, level

The way of the just is ¹ uprightness : 7
Thou that art upright dost ² direct the path of the
just.

Yea, in the way of thy judgements ^a, O LORD, 8
Have we waited for thee ;

To thy name and to thy memorial ^b
Is the desire of our soul.

With my soul have I desired thee in the night ; 9
Yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee
³ early :

³ Or,
diligently

For when thy judgements are in the earth,
The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

Let favour be shewed to the wicked, 10
Yet will he not learn righteousness ;

In the land of uprightness will he deal wrongfully ^c,
And will not behold the majesty of the LORD.

LORD, thy hand is lifted up, 11
Yet they see not :

⁴ Or, and be
ashamed, in
their envy at
the people

But they shall see ⁴ thy zeal for the people, and be
ashamed ^d ;

⁵ Or, the
fire of thine
adversaries
shall devour
them

Yea, ⁵ fire shall devour thine adversaries.

*Her oppressors being dead, Israel, now loyal to God,
is strengthened and enlarged. xxvi. 12-15.*

LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us : 12
For thou hast also wrought all our works for us.

O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have 13
had dominion over us ;

But by thee ^e only will we make mention of thy
name.

† ⁶ Or. The
dead live
not, the
deceased
rise not

⁶ They are dead, 14

They shall not live ;

They are ⁷ deceased,

They shall not rise :

† ⁷ Or,
shades
Heb.
Rephaim.

Therefore ^f hast thou visited and destroyed them,
And made all their memory to perish.

^a They had waited earnestly for God to come in the path of His judgement:
i.e. to punish the wicked.

^b 'Name' and 'memorial' are manifestations of God's power.

^c Wrong-dealing blinds man to the sight of God.

^d They would no longer be blind when God punished them.

^e By Thee, i.e. by the exercise of Thy power. God's dealings with these
'lords' would give them reason to celebrate His praise.

^f 'Dead men live not, shades rise not, therefore', &c. This is the general
rule to which the hope of ver. 19 is a glorious exception.

15 Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD,
 Thou hast increased the nation;
 Thou art glorified:

¹ Thou hast enlarged all the borders of the land.

The useless travail of the past exchanged for a joyful resurrection. xxvi. 16-19.

¹ Or, *Thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth*

16 LORD, in trouble have they ² visited thee,
 They poured out a ³ prayer *when* thy chastening
 was upon them.

² Or, *looked for*

17 Like as a woman with child, that draweth near
 the time of her delivery,

³ Heb. *whisper.*

Is in pain and crieth out in her pangs;

So have we ^a been ⁴ before thee, O LORD.

⁴ Or, *at thy presence*

18 We have been with child,

We have been in pain,

We have as it were brought forth wind;

We have not wrought any deliverance in the earth;

⁵ Or, *Neither have the inhabitants of the world been born* [†]

⁵ Neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen ^b,

19 Thy dead shall live ^c; my dead bodies shall arise.

⁶ Or, *light*

Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust:

⁷ Or, *the shades*
 Heb.

For thy dew ^d is *as* the dew of ^e herbs,

And the earth shall cast forth ⁷ the dead.

Rephaim. [†]

IV. A DRAMATIC CALL TO GOD'S PEOPLE TO HIDE UNTIL HIS JUDGEMENTS ARE PAST. xxvi. 20, 21.

20 Come, my people,
 Enter thou into thy chambers,
 And shut thy doors about thee:
 Hide thyself for a little moment,
 Until the indignation be overpast.

^a In ver. 16 and 17 there is a change of pronoun, 'they,' 'we,' for the same subject. See note on i. 29.

^b The metaphor of child-bearing suggests a second thought, the natural result of that pain. In this case it was nothing. In vain had they bewailed the loss of their people, and sought for helpers to take their place. The margin here is much to be preferred to the text.

^c This is in contrast to ver. 14. Israel's oppressors are extinguished, but Israel shall rise again. Taken in connection with the metaphor of the preceding verses, it may be questioned how far this expresses a definite belief in a resurrection. As in Ezek. xxxvii, to which it forms a close parallel, it may be rather the feeling after a glorious hope. 'Thy dead,' 'my dead bodies'. In the first phrase the prophet addresses the nation: in the second he identifies himself with it.

^d 'Thy dew' is generally understood as addressed to God, His power being compared to the life-giving (or sparkling, see marg.) dew upon herbs. But the words may be addressed to the nation, in which case the risen dead are compared to the dew in their multitude and their sparkling armour. Cf. Ps. cx. 3. See further on this in the General Introduction, p. xxvii.

For, behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his ²¹ place
 To punish the inhabitants of the earth for
 their iniquity :
 The earth also shall disclose her blood,
 And shall no more cover her slain ^a.

V. THE GREAT RESTORATION. xxvii.

PROBABLY AN EARLY PROPHECY OR PROPHECIES,
 ORIGINALLY MORE OR LESS DISCONNECTED,
 ADAPTED TO FORM A SORT OF LITERARY SUP-
 PLEMENT TO THE PRECEDING PROPHECY ^b.

The judgement on the three monsters ^c. xxvii. 1.

In that day the LORD with his sore and great and ²⁷
 strong sword shall punish leviathan the ¹ swift serpent,
 and leviathan the ² crooked serpent ; and he shall slay
 the dragon that is in the sea.

¹ Or,
gliding.
 Or, *fleeing*
² Or,
winding

*The song of the vineyard, illustrating Jehovah's care
 of His people.* xxvii. 2-5.

³ Or,
 according
 to some
 ancient
 authorities,
*A pleasant
 vineyard*
 + ⁴ Or, *of*

In that day ^d : ³ A vineyard of wine, sing ye ⁴ unto it. ²
 I the LORD do keep it ; ³
 I will water it every moment :
 Lest any hurt it,
 I will keep it night and day.

Fury is not in me ^e : ⁴
 Would that the briers and thorns were against
 me in battle !

^a Murder would not be hidden from the eyes of Jehovah, and would be punished. Probably the slaughter of His people is specially referred to.

^b The connection of xxvii with xxiv—xxvi (whether they formed originally one prophecy is uncertain) may be explained in this way. The time is coming when Jehovah will punish all her enemies, because Israel is after all under His protecting care, and will again at *some distant* future revive. The present troubles do not suggest this, but God is dealing in measure with His own people. This is expressed in a lyric parable, which is afterwards explained. But no forgiveness is possible without the abolition of idolatry, of which at present there is no sign. God's judgement continues ('calf *shall* feed', xxvii. 10, is not necessarily future). For all that, a glorious restoration is in store for His people. The mention of Assyria and Egypt, and the style in many ways, quite unlike that of xxiv—xxvi, make it not unlikely that xxvii was written by Isaiah.

^c The monsters, suggested probably by the Tigris, Euphrates, and the Nile, refer probably to Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt.

^d The words 'shall be sung' should be supplied or understood here. The vineyard is Israel, as in v. 1-7.

^e I may punish My people, but it is for their good. On the other hand, My fury is willingly outpoured against their enemies, within and without, the briers and thorns. In these last words the figure of the parable is combined with the more literal thought of war.

I would march upon them,
I would burn them together.

- 5 Or else let him take hold of my strength,
That he may make peace with me ;
Yea, let him make peace with me ^a.

The prophet's comment on the parable. xxvii. 6—8.

- 6 ¹ In days to come shall Jacob take root ;
Israel shall blossom and bud :
And they shall fill the face of the world with fruit ^b.
7 Hath he smitten him as he smote those that
smote him ^c ?
Or is he slain according to the slaughter ² of them ² Or, of
that were slain by him ? *their slain*
8 ³ In measure, ⁴ when thou sendest her away, thou ³ The
dost contend with her ; meaning of
He hath removed *her* with his rough blast in the the Hebrew
day of the east wind ^d. word is
uncertain.

Abolition of idolatry a condition of forgiveness.
xxvii. 9.

- 9 Therefore by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be
⁵ purged ^e,
And this is all the fruit ⁶ of taking away his sin ; ⁵ Or,
When he maketh all the stones of the altar as *expiated* [†]
chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, ⁶ Or, to
So that the ⁷ Asherim and the sun-images shall rise ⁷ See
no more ^a. ch. xvii. 8. [†]

*The continued desolation of the city (Jerusalem)
because of its folly. xxvii. 10, 11.*

- 10 For the defenced city is solitary,
An habitation deserted and forsaken, like the
wilderness :
There shall the calf feed ^f,

^a This vindictive mood is here softened. Even these may make peace with God, if they will accept His strength instead of opposing His will.

^b Jehovah's protecting care is a warrant for the hope of future prosperity.

^c Compared with that of their foes Israel's chastisement has been moderate.

^d This difficult verse probably means that God's temporary rejection of His people, bitter though it was like the east wind, was comparatively a moderate punishment.

^e When Israel shall make all idolatrous altar-stones like battered limestones, and shall cut down all Asherim and sun-pillars, Jacob's iniquity will be expiated. This destruction of Canaanitish idolatry points to an earlier date than that for xxiv—xxvi.

^f Cf. v. 17. The calves feed on the shrubs and women gather sticks among the ruins of Jerusalem. 'Shall' is not necessarily future here.

And there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.
 When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall ¹¹ be broken off;
 The women shall come, and set them on fire:
 For it is a people of no understanding;
 Therefore he that made them will not have compassion upon them,
 And he that formed them will shew them no favour.

The restoration of Israel. xxvii. 12, 13.

And it shall come to pass in that day ^a, that the LORD ¹² shall ¹ beat off *his fruit*, from the flood of the River unto the brook of Egypt ^b, and ye shall be ² gathered ³ one by one, O ye children of Israel ^c.
 And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great ¹³ trumpet shall be blown; and they shall come which were ⁴ ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and they that were outcasts in the land of Egypt; and they shall worship the LORD in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

[†] ¹ Or, *beat out* his corn

² Or, *gleaned*

³ Or, *one to another*

⁴ Or, *lost*

Part VI. Ch. xxviii—xxxv.

The Great Assyrian Crisis.

(A) ISAIAH CONDEMNS THE PHILO-EGYPTIAN POLICY. xxviii—xxxiii.

1. JERUSALEM'S COVENANT WITH DEATH AND HADES. xxviii. 1-22.

(724 B.C.).

(Probably republished with ver. 7-29 in 704.)

I. AN OLD PROPHECY AGAINST SAMARIA ^d. xxviii. 1-6.

Her approaching fall. xxviii. 1-4.

Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of ²⁸ Ephraim ^e,

^a The whole of the promised land would be again re-peopled, and they would be summoned to worship God upon His holy mountain.

^b The River is the Euphrates, and the brook of Egypt is the Wady el Arish in the south-west of Palestine, being the two extreme limits of the ideal kingdom of David. In all that region God's people would be harvested.

^c 'gathered' refers to corn; 'beat off' to such seeds as were beaten out of their husks with rods. Cf. xxviii. 27.

^d It may be regarded as practically certain that this prophecy was originally made when Shalmaneser was advancing upon Samaria, 724 B.C. Most commentators, such as G. Adam Smith, take the whole passage as belonging to this earlier date; but see note ^e on next page.

^e In thus attacking the drunkards of Ephraim Isaiah compares this city of

And to the fading flower of his glorious beauty,
Which is on the head of the fat valley of them that
are ¹ overcome with wine !

- 2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one ^a ; ¹ Heb. *smitten down.* †
As a tempest of hail, a destroying storm,
As a tempest of mighty waters overflowing,
Shall he cast down to the earth ² with the hand. ² Or, *with violence*
- 3 The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim
shall be trodden under foot :
- 4 And the fading flower of his glorious beauty,
Which is on the head of the fat valley,
Shall be as the firstripe fig before the summer ;
Which when he that looketh upon it seeth,
While it is yet in his hand he eateth it up ^b.

*Jehovah and not Samaria becomes the crown of
glory for the residue.* xxviii. 5, 6.

- 5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown
of glory,
And for a diadem of beauty,
Unto the residue of his people :
- 6 And for a spirit of judgement
To him that sitteth in judgement,
And for strength
To them that turn back the battle ³ at the gate. ³ Or, *to*

II. A WARNING FROM THE FATE OF SAMARIA TO THE DISSOLUTE RULERS OF JERUSALEM ^c. xxviii. 7-22.

Their intemperance denounced. xxviii. 7, 8.

- 7 But ^d these also ⁴ have erred through wine, ⁴ Or, *reel* †
And through strong drink ⁵ are gone astray ; ⁵ Or, *stagger* †
The priest and the prophet ⁴ have erred through
strong drink,
They are swallowed up of wine,
They are gone astray through strong drink ;

Samaria, which, owing to its position on the top of a very picturesque hill, was of strength and great beauty, to a chaplet of flowers destroyed by a tempest and trodden under foot by an invading army.

^a i. e. the king of Assyria.

^b He is so eager to devour that he eats it up at once.

^c Most commentators regard the whole chapter as belonging to the same early date (see note on ver. 1-6) ; but it is by no means improbable that here, as in the case of Moab, an older prophecy (though in this case one by Isaiah himself) was republished as a special warning to Judah. Ver. 15 seems to connect this with the following chapters.

^d i. e. the men of Judah are almost if not quite as bad.

†¹ Or, *reel* They ¹ err in vision,
They stumble in judgement.
For all tables are full of vomit *and* filthiness, 8
So that there is no place clean.

Their drunken mockery of the prophet. xxviii. 9, 10.

² Or, *Whom shall he teach . . . and whom shall he make . . . breasts. For &c.*

² Whom will he teach knowledge? 9
And whom will he make to understand the ³ mes-
sage?
Them that are weaned from the milk,
And drawn from the breasts?
For it is precept upon precept, precept upon 10
precept;

⁴ Or, *Rule*

⁴ Line upon line, line upon line;
Here a little, there a little ^a.

The prophet's sarcastic retort. xxviii. 11-13.

⁵ Or, *For with stammering lips*

⁵ Nay, but by *men of* strange lips and with 11
another tongue ^b
Will he speak to this people:
To whom he said, 12

This is the rest ^c,
Give ye rest to him that is weary;
And this is the refreshing:
Yet they would not hear.

Therefore shall the word of the LORD be unto 13
them

Precept upon precept, precept upon precept;
Line upon line, line upon line;
Here a little, there a little;

That they may go, and fall backward,
And be broken, and snared, and taken.

Their vain and illusory refuge contrasted with the building on a sure foundation. xxviii. 14-18.

Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful 14
men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem:
Because ye have said, 15

We have made a covenant with death ^d,

^a The objection, which imitates at once drunken speech and baby efforts to talk, is to the childish character of the prophet's teaching. The babbling effect is produced by *rhyming* monosyllables. See General Introduction, p. xxii.

^b The Assyrians, by whom God will chastise these mockers.

^c 'Rest and refreshing'—i.e. by faith in God, which it was the rulers' business to teach, but which they despised as baby-talk. Jehovah's lesson would be very simple but very effective.

^d The rulers had made a covenant with Egypt, fondly believing that it would

And with ¹ hell are we at agreement ;
 When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, ¹ Heb. *Sheol*. †
 It shall not come unto us ;

For we have made lies our refuge,
 And under falsehood have we hid ourselves :

16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD,
 Behold, I ² lay in Zion for a foundation a stone ^{a, 2} Or, *have laid*
 A tried stone,

A precious corner *stone* of sure foundation :
 He that believeth shall not make haste ^b.

17 And I will make judgement the line ^c,
 And righteousness the plummet :
 And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies,
 And the waters shall overflow the hiding place.
 18 And your covenant with death shall be disannulled,
 And your agreement with ¹ hell shall not stand ;
 When the overflowing scourge shall pass through,
 Then ye shall be trodden down by it.

What the scourge would really mean to them.

xxviii. 19-22.

19 As often as it passeth through,
 It shall take you ;
 For morning by morning shall it pass through,
 By day and by night :
 And it shall be nought but terror to understand
 the ³ message. ³ Or, *report*

20 For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch
 himself on it ;
 And the covering narrower than that he can wrap
 himself in it ^d.

21 For the LORD shall rise up as in ⁴ mount Perazim, ⁴ See 1 Chr. xiv. 11, &c. †
 He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon ^e ;
 That he may do his work, his strange work,
 And bring to pass his act, his strange act.

22 Now therefore be ye not scorers, lest your bands be
 made strong : for a consummation ^f, and that deter-

prove a refuge from the Assyrian attack. Isaiah shews them plainly what this alliance would really mean—death and hell, a mere lying promise of help.

^a Either the Davidic monarchy with its Messianic hopes, or faith, the true foundation of righteousness.

^b Will not have to move ; may rest secure.

^c God's just punishment would be definitely planned and carried out in order. Cf. xxxiv. 11.

^d Isaiah compares the trouble, or perhaps their alliance with Egypt, to a man tossing restlessly on a bed with a coverlet too narrow for him.

^e In both clauses the reference is to David's slaughter of the Philistines. See references in margin. ^f i. e. destruction. Cf. the equivalent phrase in x. 22.

mined, have I heard from the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
¹ Or, *land* upon the whole ¹ earth.

* * * *

A PARABLE TO ILLUSTRATE GOD'S TREATMENT OF MEN BY THE VARIETY AND THE VARYING SEVERITY OF AGRICULTURAL METHODS, DIVINELY TAUGHT^a.
 xxviii. 23-29.

The three stages of preparation of the soil, and different kinds of sowing. xxviii. 23-26.

Give ye ear, and hear my voice; 23

Hearken, and hear my speech.

Doth the plowman plow continually^b to sow? 24

Doth he continually open and break the clods of his ground?

When he hath made plain the face thereof, 25

Doth he not cast abroad the ² fitches,

And scatter the cummin,

And put in the wheat in rows

And the barley in the appointed place

And the spelt in the border thereof?

† ² Or, *black cummin (Nigella sativa)*

³ Or, *And he traineth each of them aright; his God doth teach him*

³ For his God doth instruct him aright, 26
And doth teach him.

Various methods of threshing employed for different sorts of grain. xxviii. 27-29.

† ⁴ Or, *Is bread corn crushed? Nay, he will not ever be threshing it, and driving his cart wheels and his horses over it; he doth not crush it*

For the fitches are not threshed with a sharp 27
threshing instrument,

Neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin;

But the fitches are beaten out with a staff,

And the cummin with a rod^c.

⁴ Bread corn is ground; 28

^a This very striking parable, which bears some resemblance in thought to xxvii. 7, is not apparently connected with its context, and it is difficult even to conjecture when it was written. Its meaning is this: Jehovah's dealings at different epochs, difficult as they may be to understand, and severe as they seem to be, have one end in view, the perfecting of the human race. But He does not treat all alike; some need severer discipline than others.

^b The emphasis is on 'continually'. Lit., 'Does He *all the day* plough to sow?' It is not enough simply to plough and sow. He has much more to do, both before and after. So with God.

^c The seeds of the cummin, an umbelliferous plant, were easily separated from their stalks by beating with a rod. The seeds of the 'fitches' (*Nigella sativa*), a plant closely allied to our 'love in a mist', readily fall from their capsules. Both are used as a condiment and as medicine. To use a threshing instrument or a cart wheel for either would be both absurd and harmful.

For he will not ever be threshing it ^a :
 And though the wheel of his cart and his horses
 scatter it ^b,
 He doth not grind it.

- 29 This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts,
 Which is wonderful in counsel,
 And excellent in ¹ wisdom ^c.

* * * *

¹ Or,
*effectual
 working*

2. PROPHECIES DELIVERED DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF SENNACHERIB.

xxix—xxxiii.

I. JUDGEMENT, MERCY, AND SALVA- TION. xxix.

Jerusalem ere long to be abased and in despair.

xxix. 1-4.

- 29 ² Ho ³ Ariel, Ariel ^d,
 The city where David encamped !
 Add ye year to year ;
 Let the feasts come round :
 2 Then will I distress Ariel,
 And there shall be mourning and lamentation :
⁴ And she shall be unto me as Ariel.
 3 And I will camp against thee round about,
 And will lay siege against thee with a fort,
 And I will raise siege works against thee.
 4 And thou shalt be brought down,
 And shalt speak out of the ground,
 And thy speech shall be low out of the dust ;
 And thy voice shall be as of one that hath a
 familiar spirit ^e, out of the ground,
 And thy speech shall ⁵ whisper out of the dust.

² Or,
Woe to †

³ That is,
*The lion
 of God
 or, The
 hearth of
 God.*

⁴ Or, *Yet*

⁵ Or, *chirp*

*Her enemies overthrown in the very hour of their
 triumph. xxix. 5-8.*

- 5 But the multitude of thy ⁶ foes shall be like small ⁶ Heb.
 dust, *strangers.*

^a The threshing-sledge is used only long enough to separate the corn from the ears, not to crush the corn itself. So God exercises discipline long enough to correct, not to crush His people.

^b This is the only place in the O.T. where horses are mentioned in connexion with agriculture. Oxen were generally employed for treading out the corn. See Deut. xxv. 4.

^c It is by God's wisdom that the farmer acts in ways that are like God's.

^d Ariel probably means altar-hearth. (Cf. Ezek. xliii. 15, where the word is used in this sense.) Isaiah probably meant that Jerusalem should become an altar-hearth reeking with the blood of victims.

^e A medium through whom the ghost was believed to speak, an effect probably produced by ventriloquism. See note on viii. 19.

And the multitude of the terrible ones as chaff that
passeth away :

Yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.

¹ Or, *There shall be a visitation from the LORD &c.*

¹ She shall be visited of the LORD of hosts 6
With thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise,
With whirlwind and tempest,
And the flame of a devouring fire.

And the multitude of all the nations that fight 7
against Ariel,

Even all that fight against her and her strong hold,
And that distress her,

Shall be as a dream, a vision of the night ^a.

And it shall be as when an hungry man dreameth, 8
and, behold, he eateth ;

But he awaketh, and his soul is empty :

Or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold,
he drinketh ;

But he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint,

And his soul hath appetite :

So shall the multitude of all the nations be, that
fight against mount Zion.

*Leaders and people alike blind and heedless of God's
warnings. xxix. 9-12.*

^{†2} Or, *Be ye amazed*

^{†3} Or, *Blind yourselves and be blind*

² Tarry ye and wonder ^b ; 9

³ Take your pleasure and be blind :

They are drunken, but not with wine ;

They stagger, but not with strong drink.

For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit 10
of deep sleep,

And hath closed ⁴ your eyes, the prophets ^c ;

And your heads, the seers, hath he covered.

⁴ Or, *your eyes ; the prophets, and &c.*

⁵ Or, *writing*

^{†6} Heb. *knoweth writing (or letters).*

And all vision is become unto you as the words 11
of a ⁵ book that is sealed, which men deliver to one
that ⁶ is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee : and
he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed : and the book is 12
delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this,
I pray thee : and he saith, I am not learned ^d.

^a They and their plans for the destruction of Jerusalem would pass away like a dream. Cf. Ps. lxxiii. 20.

^b The first clause expresses the stupid amazement with which they regard the warnings of the prophet.

^c The words 'prophets' and 'seers' are probably glosses ; it is more likely that 'eyes' and 'heads' should be understood as those of individuals, not as representing a class.

^d The learned is too indolent and indifferent, the unlearned too ignorant to read. The passage indicates the spread of culture in Isaiah's age. Cf. Jer. v.

4, 5.

Their formalism and insincerity will be punished.

xxix. 13, 14.

- 13 And the Lord said,
 Forasmuch as this people draw nigh *unto me*,
 And with their mouth and with their lips do
 honour me,
 But have removed their heart far from me,
 And their fear of me is a commandment of men
 which hath been ¹ taught *them* :
 14 Therefore, behold, I will ² proceed to do a mar-
 vellous work among this people,
 Even a marvellous work and a wonder :
 And the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,
 And the understanding of their prudent men shall
 be hid.

¹ Or,
learned
 by rote †

² Or,
again do
 Heb. *add*
to do.

The folly of their secret political schemes. xxix. 15, 16.

- 15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel
 from the LORD,
 And their works are in the dark,
 And they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?
 16 ³ Ye turn things upside down !
 Shall the potter be counted as clay ;
 That the thing made should say of him that made it,
 He made me not ;
 Or the thing framed say of him that framed it,
 He hath no understanding ?

³ Or,
O your per-
versity! †

God will work a wonderful transformation. xxix. 17-21.

- 17 Is it not yet a very little while,
 And Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field,
 And the fruitful field shall be counted for a forest ^a ?
 18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of
⁴ the book,
 And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity
 and out of darkness.
 19 The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD,
 And the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy
 One of Israel.
 20 For the terrible one ^b is brought to nought,
 And the scorner ceaseth,
 And all they that watch for iniquity are cut off :
 21 That ⁵ make a man an offender in a cause,

⁴ Or, *a book*
or writing †

⁵ Or, *make*
men to
offend by
their words

^a These changes are probably intended to explain metaphorically the transformation described in ver. 18, 19. What is now considered a fruitful field will by comparison be regarded as a forest.

^b i.e. probably tyrants among the people, not foreign foes.

And lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate ^a,
And turn aside ^b the just with a thing of nought.

Jacob will henceforth live in a reverent fear of God.

xxix. 22-24.

Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abra-22
ham, concerning the house of Jacob :

Jacob shall not now be ashamed,
Neither shall his face now wax pale.

†¹ Or, *But
when his
children
see &c.*

¹ But when he seeth his children, the work of mine 23
hands, in the midst of him,

They shall sanctify my name ;

Yea, they shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob,
And shall stand in awe of the God of Israel.

¶ Heb. *shall
know un-
derstand-
ing.*

They also that err in spirit ² shall come to under-24
standing,

¶ Or,
instruction

And they that murmur shall learn ³ doctrine.

II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF REBELLION AND THE BLESSINGS OF FAITHFULNESS. xxx.

(1) *A DIPLOMATIC MISSION TO EGYPT DENOUNCED.* xxx. 1-17.

Their confidence in Egypt misplaced. xxx. 1-5.

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, **30**

That take counsel, but not of me ;

And that ⁴ cover with a covering, but not of my
spirit,

That they may add sin to sin :

That walk to go down into Egypt, **2**

And have not asked at my mouth ;

To ⁵ strengthen themselves in the strength of
Pharaoh,

And to trust in the shadow of Egypt !

Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your **3**
shame,

And the trust in the shadow of Egypt your con-
fusion.

For his princes are at Zoan, **4**

And his ambassadors are come to Hanes c.

^a i.e. the judge whom they try to trick. The gateway was the common place for holding courts and other public business. See notes on Amos v. 10, 12.

^b i.e. deprive him of his right by an unjust suit maintained by lies ('a thing of nought').

^c Zoan and Hanes were at the extreme limits of Lower Egypt. Perhaps they are mentioned as the names of two typical Egyptian towns, without much regard to exact geography. Zoan is often put for Egypt itself apparently.

- 5 They shall all be ashamed of a people that cannot
profit them,
That are not an help nor profit,
But a shame, and also a reproach.

Such an embassy is worse than useless. xxx. 6, 7.

- 6 The ¹burden ^aof the beasts of the South ^b,
Through the land of trouble and anguish,
From whence come the lioness and the lion,
The viper and fiery flying serpent,
They carry their riches upon the shoulders of
young asses,
And their treasures upon the bunches of camels,
To a people that shall not profit *them* ^c.

¹ Or, oracle
concern-
ing †

- 7 For Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose :
Therefore have I ²called her Rahab that sitteth
still ^d.

² Or, cried
concerning
this, They
are but
arrogancy :
be still

Judah impervious to truth and reverence. xxx. 8—11.

- 8 Now go, write it before them on a tablet,
And inscribe it in a book,
That it may be for the time to come
³For ever and ever.
- 9 For it is a rebellious people,
Lying children,
Children that will not hear the ⁴law of the LORD :
Which say to the seers, See not ;
And to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things,
Speak unto us smooth things,
Prophesy deceits :
Get you out of the way,
Turn aside out of the path,
Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

³ Or,
according
to some
ancient
authorities,
For a wit-
ness for
ever †
⁴ Or,
teaching †

Cheyne and G. A. Smith both render ver. 4 and 5, When his (i.e. Judah's) princes . . . they shall, &c.

^a It is probable that this little oracle which, in its enigmatical title and style, resembles some of the other oracles in xiii—xxiii, originally belonged to that collection, but was inserted here from its resemblance in subject to the previous paragraph, from which, however, it is quite distinct.

^b The 'South' is that desert region to the south of Judah called the Negeb. It would have been crossed by the Jewish embassy on its way to Egypt. The 'beasts' would mean the camels, &c., making their way through it.

^c The ambassadors undergo a very fatiguing and dangerous journey all to no purpose.

^d There is a play here on the word Rahab, which means a crocodile or sea-monster, but sometimes a mythological being (Job xxvi. 12). It was a common nickname of Egypt (see Ps. lxxxvii. 4; lxxxix. 10). It is also used in the sense of pride in Job ix. 13. Among other renderings of the phrase G. A. Smith suggests 'Braggart, that sitteth still'.

Her disaster will be sudden and complete. xxx. 12-14.

Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, 12
 Because ye despise this word,
 And trust in oppression and perverseness,
 And stay thereon ;
 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach 13
 ready to fall,
 Swelling out in a high wall,
 Whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.
 And he shall break it as a potter's vessel is broken, 14
 Breaking it in pieces without sparing ;
 So that there shall not be found among the pieces
 thereof a sherd
 To take fire from the hearth,
 Or to take water withal out of the cistern ^a.

The true policy contrasted in its consequences with the false. xxx. 15-17.

For thus said the Lord GOD, the Holy One of 15
 Israel,
 In returning and rest shall ye be saved ;
 In quietness and in confidence shall be your
 strength :
 And ye would not.
 But ye said, No, for we will flee upon horses ; 16
 Therefore shall ye flee :
 And, We will ride upon the swift ;
 Therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.
 One thousand *shall flee* at the rebuke of one ; 17
 At the rebuke of five shall ye flee :
 Till ye be left as ¹ a beacon upon the top of a
 mountain,
 And as an ensign on an hill ^b.

¹ Or, a mast

(2) *THE HAPPY AGE WHICH WOULD FOLLOW
 IN GOD'S GOOD TIME.* xxx. 18-26.

Jehovah's gracious and opportune intervention.

xxx. 18, 19.

And therefore ^c will the LORD wait, 18

^a The point of the first simile—a bulging wall—is that the danger, which but for their perversity they would have long realised, comes suddenly in the end ; of the second—(a broken jar with no piece large enough to carry fire from the hearth or water from a tank)—the utter destruction that would follow.

^b Isaiah here hints at the promise of the remnant which he had almost forgotten in ver. 14, and it is further developed in the next paragraph.

^c 'Therefore' is variously explained : 'because of your great need' (Cheyne)

That he may be gracious unto you,
And therefore will he be exalted,

That he may have mercy upon you :
For the LORD is a God of judgement ;
Blessed are all they that wait for him.

- 19 For ¹ the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem : ¹ Or, *O people that dwellest in Zion at Jerusalem*
Thou shalt weep no more ;
He will surely be gracious unto thee at the voice
of thy cry ;
When he shall hear, he will answer thee.

Religious privilege and teaching restored. xxx. 20, 21.

- 20 ² And though the Lord give you the bread of ² Or, *And the Lord will give . . . and thy teachers shall not &c.*
adversity
And the water of affliction,
Yet shall not thy ³ teachers ⁴ be hidden any more,
But thine eyes shall see thy ³ teachers :
21 And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, ³ Or, *teacher*
saying, ⁴ Or, *hide themselves*†
This is the way, walk ye in it ;
When ye turn to the right hand,
And when ye turn to the left.

Idolatry utterly abolished. xxx. 22.

- 22 And ye shall defile the overlaying of thy graven
images of silver,
And the plating of thy molten images of gold ^a :
Thou shalt ⁵ cast them away as an ⁶ unclean thing ; ⁵ Heb. *scatter.*
Thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence. ⁶ Heb. *menstruous.*

The temporal blessings of the promised age. xxx. 23-26.

- 23 And he shall give the rain of thy seed,
That thou shalt sow the ground withal ;
And bread of the increase of the ground,
And it shall be fat and plenteous :
In that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.
24 The oxen likewise and the young asses that till
the ground
Shall eat ⁷ savoury provender, ⁷ Heb. *salted.*
Which hath been winnowed with the shovel and
with the fan.
25 And there shall be upon every lofty mountain,
And upon every high hill,
Rivers *and* streams of waters,

but, preferably, ' He infers from the nature of the punishment the *continuance* of the divine wrath' (Delitzsch).

^a Idols were often made of wood plated with gold or silver. Cf. Isa. xl. 19; xlv. 10-15; xlv. 20.

In the day of the great slaughter,
 When the towers fall ^a.
 Moreover the light of the moon 26
 Shall be as the light of the sun,
 And the light of the sun shall be sevenfold,
 As the light of seven days,
 In the day that the LORD bindeth up the hurt of
 his people,
 And healeth the stroke of their wound.

(3) *THE GREAT JUDGEMENT ON ASSYRIA* ^b.
 xxx. 27-33.

The terrible advent of Jehovah. xxx. 27, 28.

Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, 27
 Burning with his anger,
 And in thick rising smoke :
 His lips are full of indignation,
 And his tongue is as a devouring fire :
 And his breath is as an overflowing stream, that 28
 reacheth even unto the neck,
 To sift the nations with the sieve of ¹ vanity :
 And a bridle that causeth to err *shall be* in the jaws
 of the peoples.

¹ Or,
destruction

Amid Judah's festal joy Assyria is destroyed. xxx. 29-33.

Ye shall have a song ^c 29
 As in the night ² when a holy feast is kept ;
 And gladness of heart,
 As when one goeth with a pipe
 To come into the mountain of the LORD,
 To the Rock of Israel.
 And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be 30
 heard,
 And shall shew the lighting down of his arm,
 With the indignation of *his* anger,
 And the flame of a devouring fire,
 With ³ a blast, and tempest, and hailstones.
 For through the voice of the LORD shall the 31
 Assyrian be broken in pieces,

² Or, *when
 a feast is
 hallowed*

³ Or,
crashing
⁴ Or, *With
 his rod shall
 he smile
 him*

⁴ Which smote with a rod.

^a A reminder that these blessings will only come to the remnant when judgement (with the horrors of war) has fallen upon the mass of the nation.

^b The judgement on Assyria follows quite naturally upon the judgement through Assyria. Even when the prophet soared to visions more or less ideal, of universal happiness or woe, these arose naturally out of present circumstances.

^c The Jews are described as rejoicing with music at the punishment of Assyria, possibly with reference to the music that accompanied human sacrifices to Moloch.

- 32 And every ¹ stroke of the ² appointed staff,
Which the LORD shall lay upon him,
Shall be with tabrets and harps :
And in battles of shaking ^a will he fight with them.
- 33 For ³ a Topheth ^b is prepared of old ;
Yea, for the king it is made ready ;
He hath made it deep and large :
The pile thereof is fire and much wood ;
The breath of the LORD, like a stream of brim-
stone, doth kindle it.

¹ Heb.
passing.
² Or, *staff*
of doom
(Heb.
foundation)
³ See 2 Kings
xxiii. 10,
Jer. vii. 31.

III. ASSYRIA'S DOWNFALL THE PRELUDE TO A REIGN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

xxx1, xxxii.

(1) *A FURTHER WARNING AGAINST AN
EGYPTIAN ALLIANCE.* xxx1.

*Israel was for making a weak power their friend, the
mighty God their enemy.* xxx1. 1-3.

- 31 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help,
And stay on horses ^c ;
And trust in chariots, because they are many,
And in horsemen, because they are very strong ;
But they look not unto the Holy One of Israel,
Neither seek the LORD !
- 2 Yet he also is wise ^d,
And will bring evil,
And will not call back his words :
But will arise against the house of the evil-
doers,
And against the help of them that work
iniquity.
- 3 Now the Egyptians are men, and not God ;

^a Probably a mixture of fact and metaphor. The battles with Assyria are compared to the brandishing of Jehovah's arm.

^b The idea is apparently that of a huge human burnt sacrifice prepared beforehand for the Assyrians with logs and fire, and Jehovah's breath igniting and burning within it. Topheth was used of apparently an altar-like erection set up in the valley of Hinnom, outside Jerusalem, probably in Manasseh's reign, for human sacrifices to Moloch (2 Kings xxiii. 10, cf. Jer. vii. 29-34 ; xix. 1-13). But it may have been used of any heathen altar, especially if employed for burning human victims, or more generally of a funeral pyre.

^c Horses had been imported from Egypt from the time of Solomon. 1 Kings x. 28.

^d Gently ironical. They, wise as they are, should give Jehovah credit for some sense and some determination, which the evil councillors would soon discover. (Some, however, take the last clause of the Egyptians.) On the other hand, even the Egyptians are not almighty, and their horses not divine.

And their horses flesh, and not spirit :
 And when the LORD shall stretch out his hand,
 Both he that helpeth shall stumble,
 And he that is holpen shall fall,
 And they all shall fail together.

*Jehovah would intervene to save His own, if they
 would but return to Him. xxxi. 4-6.*

For thus saith the LORD unto me,
 Like as when the lion growleth and the young lion ⁴
 over his prey,

If a multitude of shepherds be called forth against
 him,

 He will not be dismayed at their voice,
 Nor abase himself for the noise of them :

So shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight ^a

¹ Or,
 Against

¹ Upon mount Zion, and ¹ upon the hill thereof.

As birds flying ^b,

So will the LORD of hosts protect Jerusalem ; ⁵

 He will protect and deliver *it*,

 He will pass over and preserve *it*.

² Or, from
 whom the
 children of
 Israel have
 deeply
 revolted

Turn ye unto him ² from whom ³ ye have deeply ⁶
 revolted, O children of Israel.

The prophet anticipates this return to Jehovah.

xxxi. 7-9.

For in that day they shall cast away every man his ⁷
 idols of silver, and his idols of gold ^c, which your own
 hands have made unto you for a sin.

Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of ⁸
 man ;

And the sword, not of men, shall devour him :

And he shall flee from the sword,

And his young men shall become tributary.

And his rock ^d shall pass away by reason of terror, ⁹

And his princes shall be dismayed at the ensign,

 Saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion,

 And his furnace in Jerusalem ^e.

^a Jehovah would be no more afraid of the Assyrians than a lion of a number
 of shepherds.

^b Like birds of prey, eagles for example, defending their young. Curiously
 enough the same metaphor is put in the mouth of the Assyrian king in x. 14
 to shew the defencelessness of Israel. ^c Cf. ii. 20.

^d 'His rock'. The Assyrian deity (cf. xxx. 29) is to pass away in terror, and
 even Assyria's officers shall flee from the enemies' standard in the panic.

^e Here there is probably an allusion again to Ariel (see xxix. 1, 2). The
 altar-hearth would in this case consume the foe.

(2) *A PICTURE OF THE IDEAL KINGDOM*^a.

xxxii. 1-8.

Government just and beneficent. I, 2.

- 32 Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness,
And princes shall rule in judgement.
2 And a man^b shall be as an hiding place from the
wind,
And a covert from the tempest ;
As rivers of water in a dry place,
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

Public opinion enlightened and purified. xxxii. 3, 4.

- 3 And the eyes of them that see shall not be¹ Or, closed†
¹ dim,
And the ears of them that hear shall hearken.
4 The heart also of the ² rash^c shall understand² Heb. hasty
knowledge,
And the tongue of the stammerers^d shall be
ready to speak plainly.

The true aristocracy of character manifested. xxxii. 5-8.

- 5 The ³ vile person shall be no more called ⁴ liberal,³ Or, fool
Nor the ⁵ churl said to be bountiful^e. See 1 Sam.
xxv. 25.
6 For the ³ vile person will speak ⁶ villany^f,⁴ Or, noble†
And his heart will work iniquity,⁵ Or, crafty
To practise profaneness,⁶ Or, folly
And to utter error against the LORD,
To make empty the soul of the hungry,
And to cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.
7 The instruments also of the churl^g are evil :
He deviseth wicked devices
To destroy the ⁷ meek with lying words,⁷ Or, poor
Even when the needy speaketh right.
8 But the liberal deviseth liberal things ;
And ⁸ in liberal things shall he continue^h.⁸ Or, by
liberal
things shall
he stand
- * * * *

^a It is probable, although not certain, that this prophecy, which is of a Messianic character, is connected with the last chapter.^b 'a man', i.e. each one (of the princes).^c The hasty inconsiderate person who blurts out crude and unsound thoughts.^d Those whose thoughts are right but ill-expressed.^e Inverted moral relationship will cease.^f The vile person would be seen in his true character, tested by his words and actions.^g A curious phrase used for the sake of assonance. 'The machinations of the knave' (Cheyne).^h Nobility will be proved by nobility of character rather than of birth.

A PROPHECY AGAINST THE WOMEN OF
JERUSALEM LEADS UP TO THE RESTO-
RATION WHICH WOULD FOLLOW THE
DESOLATION^a. xxxii. 9-20.

False security would end in disaster. xxxii. 9-12.

Rise up, ye women that are at ease, *and* hear my voice ;

† ¹ Heb.
confident.

Ye ¹ careless daughters, give ear unto my speech.

² Or, *After
a year and
days*
Heb. *Days
abone a year.*

² For days beyond a year^b shall ye be troubled, ye ¹⁰
careless women :

For the vintage shall fail,

The ingathering shall not come.

Tremble, ye women that are at ease ;

11

Be troubled, ye careless ones :

Strip you, and make you bare,

³ Or, *put a
girdle upon*

And ³ gird *sackcloth* upon your loins^c.

They shall smite upon the breasts

12

For the pleasant fields^d,

For the fruitful vine.

Desolation of the city and surrounding country^e.

xxxii. 13, 14.

Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns ¹³
and briers^f ;

Yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city :

For the palace shall be forsaken ;

14

The populous city shall be deserted ;

† ⁴ Or, *Ophel*

⁴ The hill^g and the watch-tower shall be for dens for
ever,

A joy of wild asses,

A pasture of flocks^h ;

*To be followed by an era of righteousness, prosperity,
and peace.* xxxii. 15-20.

Until the spirit be poured upon us from on highⁱ, ¹⁵

And the wilderness become a fruitful field,

And the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

^a The date of this prophecy is very uncertain, but it may very well belong to the early days of the Assyrian campaign.

^b i. e. for a long time ; as we should say, ' for a year and a day. '

^c Cf. iii. 24.

^d There is a play on the words ' breasts ' and ' fields '.

^e It is a question whether ver. 13-20 is a continuation of ver. 9-12 or another fragment.

^f Cf. vii. 24.

^g Ophel was the swelling projection south of the Temple enclosure in Jerusalem. Perhaps the word translated ' watch-tower ' means the name of another place in the city.

^h Cf. v. 17.

ⁱ God would breathe on the face of Nature and restore it.

- 16 Then judgement shall dwell in the wilderness,
And righteousness shall abide in the fruitful field ^a.
17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace ;
And the effect of righteousness quietness and confidence for ever.
18 And my people shall abide in a peaceable habitation,
And in sure dwellings,
And in quiet resting places.
19 But it shall hail, in the downfall of the forest ;
And the city shall be utterly laid low ^b.
20 Blessed ^c are ye that sow beside all waters ^d,
That send forth the feet of the ox and the ass.

* * * *

3. THE INVASION OF SENNACHERIB.

xxxiii.

I. JERUSALEM'S PRESENT DISTRESS. 1-16.

The oppressor defied. xxxiii. 1.

- 33 Woe to thee that spoilest,
And thou wast not spoiled ;
And dealest treacherously,
And they dealt not treacherously with thee !
When thou hast ceased to spoil,
Thou shalt be spoiled ;
And when thou hast made an end to deal
treacherously,
They shall deal treacherously with thee.

Prayer for help. xxxiii. 2.

- 2 O LORD, be gracious unto us ;
We have waited for thee :
Be thou their arm every morning ^e,
Our salvation also in the time of trouble.

How the prayer would be answered. xxxiii. 3-6.

- 3 At the noise of the tumult the peoples are fled ^f ;
At the lifting up of thyself the nations are scattered.

^a Judgement and righteousness would be found everywhere.

^b A reminder that the way to this happy state lay through severe judgement and disaster, compared to a storm of hail devastating the trees.

^c Some think that in this beautiful picture of quiet rural simplicity we have Isaiah's last words. Everywhere now it would be safe to sow and to graze.

^d The waters probably refer to the little irrigating channels in gardens.

^e To chastise them.

^f The attacking nations flee at the sound sent by Jehovah.

And your spoil shall be gathered as the caterpillar ^a gathereth :

As locusts leap shall they leap upon it.

The LORD is exalted ; for he dwelleth on high : 5
He hath filled Zion with judgement and righteousness.

¹ Or, *And abundance of salvation wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times*

¹ And there shall be stability in thy times, 6
Abundance of salvation, wisdom and knowledge :
The fear of the LORD is his treasure.

The present desolation of the city and the land ^b.

xxxiii. 7-9.

Behold, their valiant ones cry without : 7
The ambassadors of peace weep bitterly.

The high ways lie waste, 8

The wayfaring man ceaseth :

He hath broken the covenant,

He hath despised the cities,

He regardeth not man.

The land mourneth and languisheth : 9

Lebanon is ashamed and withereth away :

² Or, *the Arabah*

Sharon is like ² a desert ;

And Bashan and Carmel shake off *their leaves*.

A terrible vengeance foretold. xxxiii. 10-12.

Now will I arise, saith the LORD ; 10

Now will I lift up myself ;

Now will I be exalted.

Ye shall conceive chaff ^c, 11

Ye shall bring forth stubble :

Your breath is a fire that shall devour you.

And the peoples ^d shall be as the burnings of lime : 12

As thorns cut down, that are burned in the fire.

The sinners in Zion must expect a similar fate, but there is happiness for those who repent. xxxiii. 13-16.

Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done ^e ; 13

^a By caterpillar is meant a kind of locust. Just as an army of locusts leaves nothing green behind it (cf. Joel ii. 3), so will Israel spoil the Assyrians.

^b After having accepted the tribute (2 Kings xviii. 15, 16) Sennacherib broke faith (ibid. ver. 17), and demanded the surrender of Jerusalem. This renewal of hostilities meant a further devastation of the country, and roused the religious patriotism of Isaiah.

^c Ver. 11 and 12 are addressed to the enemy. 'Your plans will be waste labour, and their execution will prove your own ruin.'

^d As in ver. 3, the various nations forming the Assyrian army.

^e The whole world is summoned to hear and realise the significance of God's great work. The sinners in Zion especially dread the renewed presence of so terrible a God.

- And, ye that are near, acknowledge my might.
- 14 The sinners in Zion are afraid ;
Trembling hath surprised the godless ones.
Who among us shall dwell with the devouring
fire ?
Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burn-
ings ^a ?
- 15 He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly ;
He that despiseth the gain of ¹ oppressions ^b, ¹ Or, *fraud*
That shaketh his hands from holding of bribes,
That stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood,
And shutteth his eyes from looking upon evil ^c ;
- 16 He shall dwell on high ^d :
His place of defence shall be the munitions of
rocks :
His bread shall be given *him* ;
His waters shall be sure.

II. FURTHER PROMISES TO THE RIGHT- EOUS AND REPENTANT. xxxiii. 17-24.

The vision of the king and his far-stretching land.
xxxiii. 17.

- 17 Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty :
They shall behold ² a far stretching land ^e. ² Or, *a land that is very far off*
The present terror a distant memory ^f. 18, 19. ^{Heb. a land of far distances.}
- 18 Thine heart shall muse on the terror :
Where is ³ he that counted ^g, ³ Or, *the scribe*
Where is he that weighed *the tribute* ?
Where is he that counted the towers ^h ?
- 19 Thou shalt not see the fierce people,
A people of a deep speech that thou canst not
perceive ;
Of a ⁴ strange tongue that thou canst not ⁴ Or, *stammering*
understand.

^a Allusions to the terror of Jehovah's destructive might, as shewn by the slaughter of His enemies.

^b Gain obtained by oppressing the poor, the capital sin of the Jews.

^c Who will not listen to any suggestion of murder or evil doing.

^d These metaphors are all suggested by the siege. Literally, He should be in a place of perfect security from the enemy, well supplied with the necessities of life ; meaning that he would be safe and prosperous under God's protection.

^e i.e. a glorious king, and wide-extending realm. 'Thine', i.e. of him 'that walketh righteously' (ver. 15). The change of pronoun is frequent in Isaiah. See note on i. 29.

^f So terrible was this present condition, that the release from it was one of the happiest anticipations of the future.

^g The officers who exacted the tribute.

^h Who calculated the city's strength with a view to its capture.

Zion's peace and security under Jehovah's protection.

xxxiii. 20-22.

†¹ Or,
set feasts

Look upon Zion, the city of our ¹ solemnities : 20
 Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation,
 A tent that shall not be removed,
 The stakes whereof shall never be plucked up,
 Neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.

² Or, *But in
the place . . .
streams
there shall
go &c.*

But there the LORD will be with us in majesty, 21
² A place of broad rivers and streams ^a ;
 Wherein shall go no galley with oars ^b ,
 Neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.
 For the LORD is our judge, 22
 The LORD is our lawgiver,
 The LORD is our king ;
 He will save us.

For man's extremity would be God's opportunity.

xxxiii. 23.

Thy tacklings are loosed ^c ; 23
 They could not strengthen the foot of their mast,
 They could not spread the sail :
 Then was the prey of a great spoil divided ;
 The lame took the prey ^d .

There will be health in body and soul. xxxiii. 24.

And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick : 24
 The people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their
 iniquity.

^a 'Rivers and streams' : the first of these words is that almost always used of the Euphrates, the second of the Nile. Cf. Nahum iii. 8. Jehovah would prove a better defence of Judah than the great rivers of Assyria and Egypt to these nations.

^b To attack them, or bring an enemy to attack them, as they might on the Nile or Euphrates.

^c The prophet reverts abruptly to the present condition of Jerusalem compared to a storm-tossed vessel, only to point to the suddenness of the Assyrian downfall.

^d 'The lame', because no resistance was offered.

(B) TWO SUPPLEMENTARY PROPHECIES
DEALING WITH KINDRED SUBJECTS ^a.

xxxiv, xxxv.

I. A UNIVERSAL JUDGEMENT AND A
SPECIAL VENGEANCE. THE UTTER DE-
STRUCTION OF ISRAEL'S ENEMIES ^b. xxxiv.

*All nations summoned to hear Jehovah's terrible judge-
ment on the world.* xxxiv. 1-4.

- 34 Come near, ye nations, to hear ;
And hearken, ye peoples :
Let the earth hear, and the fulness thereof ;
The world, and all things that come forth of it.
2 For the LORD hath indignation against all the
nations,
And fury against all their host :
He hath ¹ utterly destroyed them, ¹ Heb.
devoted. †
He hath delivered them to the slaughter.
3 Their slain also shall be cast out,
And the stink of their carcases shall come up,
And the mountains shall be melted with their
blood ^c.
4 And all the host of heaven shall ² be dissolved ^d, ² Or,
And the heavens shall be rolled together as *moulder away*
a scroll :
And all their host shall fade away,
As the leaf fadeth from off the vine,
And as a fading leaf from the fig tree.

Jehovah's great hecatomb in Bozrah. xxxiv. 5-8.

- 5 For my sword hath drunk its fill in heaven :
Behold, it shall come down upon Edom ^e,

^a These prophecies, dealing, the one apparently with a universal judgement on Israel's enemies (or on Edom, see note ^e), the other with a great restoration, were probably placed after the group dealing with the fate of Assyria for the same reason that ch. xxiv ff. followed the 'Book of Oracles'. It is practically certain, however, that they were independent of each other, and both much later than Isaiah.

^b Probably written during the Exile, at a time when the Israelites bitterly resented the conduct of Edom at the final siege of Jerusalem. See Obadiah and Ps. cxxxvii. 7.

^c Mountains are said to melt when rivers of water pour down after storms of rain, but in this case they would be rivers of blood. See Mic. i. 4.

^d A common figure in prophecy. A judgement on the world is accompanied by a judgement on heaven.

^e We must either suppose that Edom is taken as a type of all the enemies of Israel, or that the universal description of the judgement is a poetical magnification of the catastrophe. A similar difficulty occurs in ch. xxiv. 10, where see note. At any rate, the prophet must have had Edom especially in view.

†¹ Heb.
devoting,
or, ban.

And upon the people of my ¹ curse, to judgement.
The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, 6
It is made fat with fatness,
With the blood of lambs and goats,
With the fat of the kidneys of rams :
For the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah ^a,
And a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
And the wild-oxen shall come down with them, 7
And the bullocks with the bulls ;
And their land shall be drunken with blood,
And their dust made fat with fatness.
For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, 8
The year of recompence in the controversy of
Zion.

Their land burnt up and made utterly desolate.

xxxiv. 9, 10.

And the streams thereof shall be turned into 9
pitch,
And the dust thereof into brimstone,
And the land thereof shall become burning pitch.
It shall not be quenched night nor day ; 10
The smoke thereof shall go up for ever :
From generation to generation it shall lie waste ;
None shall pass through it for ever and ever.

*Their land to be haunted for ever by wild beasts and
demons. xxxiv. 11-17.*

² Or, bittern

But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it ; 11
And the ² owl and the raven shall dwell therein :
And he shall stretch over it the line of confusion,
And the ³ plummet of emptiness.

³ Heb.
stones.

⁴ Or, As for
her nobles,
none shall
be there to
proclaim the
kingdom

⁴ They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, 12
but none shall be there ;
And all her princes shall be nothing.
And thorns shall come up in her palaces, 13
Nettles and thistles in the fortresses thereof :
And it shall be an habitation of jackals,
A court for ostriches.

⁵ Heb.
howling
creatures.

⁶ Or, he-goat

⁷ Heb.
Lilith.

And the wild beasts of the desert ^b shall meet with 14
the ⁵ wolves,
And the ⁶ satyr shall cry to his fellow ;
Yea, ⁷ the night-monster shall settle there,
And shall find her a place of rest.

^a An important town of Edom. Cf. Isa. lxiii. 1.

^b Cf. xiii. 21, 22, where a similar description is given of Babylon in what is also a late prophecy.

- 15 There shall the arrowsnake make her nest, and lay,
And hatch, and gather under her shadow :
Yea, there shall the kites be gathered,
Every one with her mate.
- 16 Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read :
No one of these shall be missing,
None shall want her mate ^a :
For my mouth it hath commanded,
And his spirit it hath gathered them ^b.
- 17 And he hath cast the lot for them,
And his hand hath divided it unto them by line ^c :
They shall possess it for ever,
From generation to generation shall they dwell
therein.

II. DIVINE BLESSING AND REDEMPTION FOR ZION ^d. xxxv.

Transformation of nature when God's glory is revealed.

xxxv. 1, 2.

- 35 The wilderness and the ¹solitary place shall be ¹Or,
glad ; *parched*
And the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the *land* [†]
²rose ^e.
- 2 It shall blossom abundantly,
And rejoice even with joy and singing ; ² Or,
The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, *autumn*
The excellency of Carmel and Sharon : *crocus*
They shall see the glory of the LORD ^f, *See*
The excellency of our God. *Cant. ii. 1. †*

Encouragement in the hope of God's Advent. xxxv. 3, 4.

- 3 Strengthen ye the weak hands,
And confirm the ³feeble knees. ³ Or,
tottering [†]
- ^a When the time foretold was fulfilled, they were to look back to the prophecy and see how exactly it had been fulfilled. A poetical way of emphasizing the prediction, not to be pressed too literally.
- ^b A very remarkable change of pronouns, if this is the true text. But probably we should read 'His mouth', a hardly distinguishable word. In any case both pronouns refer to Jehovah.
- ^c Jehovah apportions the ruin to these animals as definitely and systematically as to a race of men. Cf. xxviii. 17, and see note on Amos vii. 8, 9.
- ^d As arranged in the book this forms a pleasing contrast to ch. xxxiv, but it was not necessarily connected with it originally. In many ways, in tone, and style, and thought, this chapter resembles very closely Isa. xl—lv, and it seems most natural to refer it to the period (viz. shortly before the return from exile), if not indeed to the writer of those chapters.
- ^e Cf. Isa. xli. 18, 19; lv. 12, 13.
- ^f Cf. Isa. xl. 5. Carmel (the little garden) is still famous for its wild flowers, and Sharon was celebrated for the 'rose'—perhaps the narcissus.

¹ Heb. *hasty*.

Say to them that are of a ¹ fearful heart, 4
Be strong, fear not ^a:

² Or, *Behold,
your God!
vengeance
will come,
even the
recompence
of God*

² Behold, your God will come *with* vengeance,
With the recompence of God;
He will come and save you ^b.

God's restoration of man and nature. xxxv. 5-7.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened ^c, 5
And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, 6
And the tongue of the dumb shall sing:
For in the wilderness shall waters break out,
And streams in the desert ^d.

³ Or,
mirage

And the ³ glowing sand shall become a pool, 7
And the thirsty ground springs of water:
In the habitation of jackals, ^e where they lay,
Shall be ⁴ grass with reeds and rushes ^f.

⁴ Or, *a court
for reeds &c.*
See
ch. xxxiv. 13.

*The road of holiness which leads to Zion and everlasting
joy.* xxxv. 8-10.

And an high way shall be there ^g, 8
And a way, and it shall be called The way of
holiness;

The unclean shall not pass over it;

⁵ Or, *For he
shall be with
them &c.*
[†] Or, *And he
shall walk
in the way
for them,
and fools &c.*

⁵ But it shall be for those:
The wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err
therein ^h.

No lion shall be there, 9
Nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon,
They shall not be found there;
But the redeemed shall walk *there*;

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return ⁱ, 10

^a Cf. Isa. xli. 10, 14.

^b Better, 'Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The recompence of God it (or He) will come and save you.' So the accents and parallelism require.

^c Cf. xlii. 18.

^d Cf. xli. 18.

^e The dry desert.

^f In the last half-verse a contrast is often understood to the desolation of xxxiv. 13. But there it was literal, here probably metaphorical. The meaning of the last words is very uncertain, and probably the text is corrupt.

^g In the desert which separated Babylonia from Palestine, cf. Isa. xl. 3-5; but there it is the high road for Jehovah to come, here probably the highway for the exiles to return.

^h The second marginal rendering is on the whole preferable, but the translation is very uncertain, and very probably the text is corrupt. The idea seems to be that God goes with them, or at least miraculously protects them from danger.

ⁱ Cf. Isa. li. 11, which is almost verbally identical with this verse. As in Deutero-Isaiah, the life of the restored exiles is idealised into the Messianic age.

And come with singing unto Zion ;
 And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads :
 They shall obtain gladness and joy,
 And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Part III. xxxvi—xxxix.

AN HISTORICAL SECTION.

I. SENNACHERIB'S HUMILIATING FAILURE.

xxxvi, xxxvii. 701 B.C.

The Rabshakeh's mission. xxxvi. 1-3.

36¹ Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king ¹See 2 Kings xviii. 13, 17, &c.
 Hezekiah, that ²Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. ² Heb. *Sanherib*.
² And the king of Assyria sent ³Rabshakeh from La- ³ The title of an Assyrian officer.
 chish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper
³ pool in the high way of the fuller's field. Then came forth unto him Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the ⁴scribe, and Joah ⁴ Or, *secretary*
 the son of Asaph the ⁵recorder. ⁵ Or, *chronicler*

His appeal to the king. xxxvi. 4-10.

4 And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?
 5 I say, *thy* counsel and strength for the war are but vain words : now on whom dost thou trust, that thou
 6 hast rebelled against me? Behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt ; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it : so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that
 7 trust on him. But if thou say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God : is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship
 8 before this altar? Now therefore, I pray thee, ⁶give ⁶ Or, *make a wager with*
 pledges to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy
 9 part to set riders upon them. How then canst thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for
 10 chariots and for horsemen^a? And am I now come

^a The least of the Assyrian captains could give them more help than the whole of Egypt.

up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

His appeal to the citizens. xxxvi. 11-20.

† ¹ Heb.
Aramean.

Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto ¹¹ Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the ¹ Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall. But Rabshakeh said, ¹² Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? *hath he not sent me* to the men that sit upon the wall, to eat their own dung, and to drink their own water with you? Then Rabshakeh ¹³ stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Let ¹⁴ not Hezekiah deceive you; for he shall not be able to deliver you: neither let Hezekiah make you trust ¹⁵ in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Harken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith ¹⁶ the king of Assyria, ² Make your peace with me, and come out to me; and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern^a: until I come and ¹⁷ take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards. Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The ¹⁸ LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and ¹⁹ Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who are ²⁰ they among all the gods of these countries, that have delivered their country out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?

² Heb.
*Make with
me a
blessing.*

Sennacherib's words are reported to the king.

xxxvi. 21, 22.

But they held their peace, and answered him not ²¹ a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not. Then came Eliakim the son of ²² Hilkiash, that was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to

^a i. e. enjoy the blessings of peace and prosperity instead of the horrors of a siege, in contrast to ver. 12.

Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

Hezekiah's message to Isaiah. xxxvii. 1-5.

- 37¹ And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, ¹ See that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with ² Kings sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. xix. †
- 2 And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the
- 3 son of Amoz. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of contumely: for the children are come to the
- 4 birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, ² whom the king of Assyria his master ² Or, hath sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke ^{wherewith the king of Assyria...} the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: ^{hath sent him †} wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is
- 5 left. So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

Jehovah's answer. xxxvii. 6, 7.

- 6 And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of
- 7 the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him, and he shall hear a rumour^a, and shall return unto his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

Sennacherib's letter to Hezekiah. xxxvii. 8-13.

- 8 So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was
- 9 departed from Lachish. And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come out to fight against thee. And when he heard it, he sent mes-
- 10 sengers to Hezekiah, saying, Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of
- 11 Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by ³ destroying them ³ Heb. utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods ^{devoting them.} of the nations delivered them, which my fathers have

^a Probably a spirit of panic. The rumour perhaps refers to some report of insurrection in his own country.

destroyed, Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and ¹Ivvah^a?

¹ In 2 Kings xvii. 24, *Avva*.

Hezekiah's prayer. xxxvii. 14-20.

² Or, *dwellest between*

And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, that ²sittest upon the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the countries, and their land, and have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone; therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD, even thou only.

The answer of God by the prophet. xxxvii. 21-35.

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria,

This is the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him:

The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn;

The daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head ³at thee.

³ Heb. *after*.

Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed?

And against whom hast thou exalted thy voice

And lifted up thine eyes on high?

Even against the Holy One of Israel.

By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said,

With the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains,

^a Neither god nor king could save them. Cf. xxxvi. 14-20.

To the innermost parts of Lebanon^a;
 And I will cut down the tall cedars thereof,
 And the choice¹ fir trees thereof:
 And I will enter into his farthest height,
 The forest of his fruitful field.

¹ Or, *cypress*

25 I have digged and drunk water,
 And with the sole of my feet will I dry up all the
 rivers of² Egypt^b.

26 Hast thou not heard how I^c have done it long
 ago,

² Or, *defence*
 Heb. *Mazor*.
 See ch. xix. 6.

And formed it of ancient times?
 Now have I brought it to pass,
 That thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities
 into ruinous heaps.

27 Therefore their inhabitants were of small power,
 They were dismayed and confounded;
 They were as the grass of the field,
 And as the green herb,
 As the grass on the housetops,
 And as³ a field of corn before it be grown
 up.

³ In 2 Kings
 xix. 26, *corn*
blasted.†

28 But I know thy sitting down,
 And thy going out, and thy coming in,
 And thy raging against me.

29 Because of thy raging against me,
 And for that⁴ thine arrogancy is come up into
 mine ears,

⁴ Or, *thy*
careless
ease †

Therefore will I put my hook in thy nose,
 And my bridle in thy lips,
 And I will turn thee back by the way by which
 thou camest.

30 And this shall be the sign unto thee: ye shall eat
 this year that which groweth of itself, and in the
 second year that which springeth of the same; and
 in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vine-
 yards, and eat the fruit thereof^d.

^a Chariots would not naturally be driven either to the height of the mountains
 or the innermost part of a forest.

^b He could find water wherever he chose to dig, and could dry up the Nile
 itself by simply touching it with his feet.

^c God's answer to Sennacherib's boasts. Cf. Isa. x. 5-15.

^d The time must have been towards the close of the year in which, owing to
 the invasion of the Assyrians, they had to depend upon the chance wheat which
 had come up from naturally shed grain. It would then be too late to break
 the ground and sow. This would be done next year, and in the following year
 they would have a regular harvest. The fulfilment of this prophecy would be
 a sign of the fulfilment of the further promise that the remnant of Israelites that
 escaped the Assyrian calamity would be a large and prosperous people.

¹ Heb. *the escaped of the house of Judah that remain.*

And ¹ the remnant that is escaped of the house of 31
Judah

Shall again take root downward,
And bear fruit upward.

For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, 32

And out of mount Zion they that shall escape :

The zeal of the LORD of hosts shall perform this.

Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king 33
of Assyria,

He shall not come unto this city,

Nor shoot an arrow there,

Neither shall he come before it with shield,

Nor cast a mount against it.

By the way that he came, 34

By the same shall he return,

And he shall not come unto this city,

Saith the LORD.

For I will defend this city to save it, 35

For mine own sake,

And for my servant David's sake.

*The destruction of the Assyrians, and the flight and
death of Sennacherib ^a. xxxvii. 36-38.*

And the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in 36
the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore
and five thousand : and when men arose early in the
morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So 37
Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and
returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to 38
pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch
his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons
smote him with the sword : and they escaped into
the land of Ararat. And Esar-haddon his son reigned
in his stead.

II. HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS. xxxviii.

(1) *HIS PRAYER AND THE PROMISE OF RECOVERY.*

xxxviii. 1-8. (See also note on ver. 21, 22.)

^{† 2} See

² Kings xx.
1, &c.

² In those days ^b was Hezekiah sick unto death. And 38

^a This was not till 681 B.C., twenty years after the destruction of Sennacherib's army. No account is given naturally of this disaster in the monuments, but it is a significant fact that Sennacherib undertook no more campaigns in the west.

^b As it is very unlikely that Hezekiah should have lived fifteen years after 701 B.C., and as Sennacherib finally overthrew Merodach-baladan before his invasion of Palestine, it is evident that the events recorded in ch. xxxviii and xxxix took place before those recorded in xxxvi and xxxvii, and during the reign of Sargon.

Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.
 2 Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and
 3 prayed unto the LORD, and said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept
 4 sore. Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah,
 5 saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add
 6 unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria:
 7 and I will defend this city^a. And this shall be the sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do
 8 this thing that he hath spoken: behold, I will cause the shadow on the steps^b, which is gone down on the
 1 dial of Ahaz² with the sun, to return backward ten¹ steps. So the sun returned ten steps³ on the dial¹ whereon it was gone down.

¹ Heb. steps. †
² Or, by
³ Or, by which steps it &c. †

(2) *HIS SONG OF THANKSGIVING*^c. xxxviii. 9-20.

His dread and certain conviction of death. xxxviii. 9-14.

- 9 The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness.
 10 I said, In the⁴ noontide of my days I shall go into the gates of⁵ the grave:
 I am deprived of the residue of my years.
 11 I said, I shall not see⁶ the LORD, *even*⁶ the LORD⁶ in the land of the living:
 I shall behold man no more⁷ with the inhabitants of the world.
 12 Mine⁸ age^d is removed, and is carried away from me as a shepherd's tent:

⁴ Or, tranquillity †
⁵ Heb. Sheol. †

⁶ Heb. Jah.

⁷ Or, when I am among them that have ceased to be †

⁸ Or, habitation †

^a See note on ver. 22.

^b Either literally the 'stairs' of some building, or less probably an erection (an obelisk surrounded by steps) expressly designed for ascertaining the time of day.

^c It is not unlikely that this psalm, which is not in 2 Kings, was, like Ps. xlii, xliii, composed by a Levite (see ver. 15 and 20) and afterwards assigned to Hezekiah. Cf. the parallel case of Hannah's song, 1 Sam. ii. 1-10.

^d 'Habitation.' The end of life is compared to the taking down of a nomad's tent, suggesting the idea of departure, perhaps exile. The metaphor is from rolling up and putting by the newly-woven cloth. This suggests a very similar metaphor, cutting off the thread from the thrums. The change of tense and person are subtle. The past tenses imply that death is as certain as though it had already happened; the future is the expectation of death at God's hand.

† ¹ Heb.
thrum.

I have rolled up like a weaver my life ;
He will cut me off from the ¹ loom :
From day even to night wilt thou make an end of
me.

² Or,
*I thought
until morn-
ing, As a
lion, so will
he break &c.*

² I quieted *myself* until morning ; 13
As a lion, so he breaketh all my bones :
From day even to night wilt thou make an end
of me.

Like a swallow *or* ■ crane, so did I chatter ; 14
I did mourn as a dove :
Mine eyes fail *with looking* upward ;
O LORD, I am oppressed, be thou my surety.

His grateful joy on the assurance of his recovery.

xxxviii. 15-22.

³ Or, *as in
solemn
procession*
See Ps. xlii. 4.

What shall I say ? he hath ^a both spoken unto me, 15
and himself hath done it :

I shall go ³ softly ^b all my years because of the
bitterness of my soul.

⁴ Or, *So wilt
thou recover
me*

O Lord, by these things ^c men live, 16
And wholly therein is the life of my spirit :

⁴ Wherefore recover thou me, and make me to live.
Behold, *it was* for *my* peace *that* I had great bitter- 17
ness :

⁵ Heb. *thou
hast loved
my soul
from the pit.*

But ⁵ thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from
the pit of ⁶ corruption ;

For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back ^d.

⁶ Or,
nothingness
† ⁷ Heb.
Sheol.

For ⁷ the grave cannot praise thee, 18
Death cannot celebrate thee :
They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy
truth ^e.

The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do 19
this day :

The father to the children shall make known thy
truth ^f.

^a He hath promised and wrought recovery.

^b i.e. in comfort and ease. But the marginal interpretation is at least paralleled by ver. 10, and is very possibly right. 'Because of', literally 'upon', meaning either after (i.e. in contrast to) his past trouble, or in a spirit of penitence.

^c By the words and promises of God. God had only to do as He had promised, and the prophet's life was secured. But no real doubt is implied.

^d The prophet recognises the value of the chastisement, but sees the proof of God's love and forgiveness in a recovery which to the eye of faith is already accomplished.

^e Cf. Ps. lxxxviii. 10-12.

^f The knowledge of God's love would be handed down from generation to generation.

20 The LORD is *ready* to save me :

Therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life

In the house of the LORD ^a.

21 ¹ Now Isaiah had said ^b, Let them take a cake of figs, ¹ See 2 Kings xx. 7, 8. [†] and lay ^c it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall

22 recover. Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD ?

III. MERODACH-BALADAN'S EMBASSY.

xxxix.

Hezekiah's reception of the envoys. xxxix. 1, 2.

39 ² At that time Merodach-baladan ^d the son of Baladan, ² See 2 Kings xx. 12, &c. [†] king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he heard that he had been sick, and was recovered.

2 And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his ³ precious things, the silver, and the gold, ³ Or, *spices* ^y and the spices, and the precious oil, and all the house of his ⁴ armour, and all that was found in his treasures: ⁴ Or, *jewels there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not ^e.*

Isaiah's rebuke. xxxix. 3-8.

3 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon.

4 Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures ⁵ that I have not shewed them. Then said Isaiah to

^a Whether ver. 15 refers to a religious procession or not, the Psalmist here contemplates singing through similar psalms among the Temple choirs.

^b These two verses, which should respectively begin 'And Isaiah said', 'And Hezekiah said,' have evidently been misplaced from between ver. 6 and 7. Their misplacement has necessitated also the omission of the words 'And Isaiah said' in ver. 7, in answer to 'What is the sign', &c. The last words of ver. 22 refer to the promise 'On the third day thou shalt go up to the house of the Lord.' See 2 Kings xx. 5.

^c 'Lay it . . . &c.' This, according to the *pointed* text of the Hebrew in 2 Kings xx. 7, is stated as a fact, but with a slight change of vowels it would become as here a direction, or vice versa, the text of this passage may be changed to express a fact: 'And they laid it for a plaister on the boil, and he recovered.' Either makes good sense, and it is difficult to choose between them.

^d Merodach-baladan was a remarkable adventurer who made several nearly successful attempts to throw off the Assyrian yoke.

^e The real object of this mission was undoubtedly to obtain Hezekiah's help in his enterprise. Hence he was shewn the treasure and the armour. Congratulations and scientific curiosity (2 Chron. xxxii. 31) were but excuses,

Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts. Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, 6 and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall 7 issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah unto 8 Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.^a

^a Ch. xl—lxvi (see p. 59, note ^a) will be found in vol. iii of this edition.

MICAH

INTRODUCTION

MICAH seems to have been the youngest of that remarkable group of four, Amos and Hosea being his two immediate predecessors in the Northern Kingdom, and Isaiah his great contemporary in Judah. He lived probably at Moresheth-gath (i. 1, 14), an insignificant village in the Shephelah (as the maritime plain in SW. Judah was called), 25 miles from Jerusalem. The country here, unlike that about Tekoa, the home of Amos, on the other side of the watershed some 17 miles away, was fair and fertile, and would support a considerable farming population whose interests and anxieties Micah would share¹.

While Isaiah, the citizen of Jerusalem, was the counsellor of kings and an influence in his country's policy, Micah, a plain countryman, played a more democratic part and was mainly occupied in denouncing the moral and social wrongs prevalent among the wealthy and official classes of Judah. Naturally enough, the fate of the small villages, through which with more insight than Isaiah² he conceives the invading enemy to pass, excited in him more feeling than the fate of Jerusalem itself (i. 10-16). 'We see him on his housetop pouring forth his words before the hills and the far-stretching heathen land. In the name of every village within sight he reads a symbol of the curse that is coming upon his country and of the sins that have earned the curse³.'

In Micah, therefore, we get a picture of the period supplementing that given by Isaiah, viewed from the standpoint not so much of the statesman in the capital as of the peasant in the village. Unlike Isaiah, too, who promised inviolable security to Zion, he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem (iii. 12), and so anticipated Jeremiah by a century. It is probable that the religious reformation in Hezekiah's reign was largely due to the preaching of 'that mighty prophet who wrought a repentance greater than his great contemporary Isaiah' (Pusey).

¹ For a very striking, if perhaps somewhat ideal, picture of the country and people in Micah's time, see G. Adam Smith's *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, i. 376, 377.

² Isa. x. 28-32. The Assyrian Sennacherib, the Roman Vespasian, the Saracen Saladin, and our own English Richard I, all attacked Jerusalem from the Shephelah.

³ G. Adam Smith, *opus cit.* p. 382.

His book has been described as uniting the pessimism of Amos with the Messianic optimism of the second Zechariah. Certainly, no prophet proclaimed the Messianic hope more distinctly or in more glowing language (iv. 8—v. 2-6). It is not very easy to do justice to his literary qualities. We miss perhaps the majestic dignity of Isaiah, the dramatic power of the great Prophet of the Exile, the sympathetic wailing of Jeremiah, the stern passion of Amos, and the tenderness of Hosea; and yet, supposing the book is, on the whole, the work of one prophet¹, he has something of all these. The most striking traits, perhaps, are moral earnestness and a patriotic interest in his people. His ideas, bold and lofty, are coloured like those of Amos² with rich imagery drawn from rural life. In the solemn colloquy of vi. 1-8 we have one of the most beautiful and tender passages in the whole of Old Testament literature.

When we turn to the character of the message itself we are impressed not only by the moral depth of this earnest preacher of righteousness, but also by his evident sorrow for the judgement which he foresees, and by the no less evident gladness with which he relieves these denunciations of wrath with promises of mercy.

To Christians the most remarkable of his prophetic utterances is of course v. 2, in which he predicts the birth, in the little town of Bethlehem, of One who would be a great ruler and whose existence was from distant ages: a prophecy, be it remembered, uttered in the same age as Isaiah's glorious prophecy of the Prince of Peace (Isa. ix).

¹ The critical questions that arise in connection with this book are more than usually difficult, and cannot be regarded as decisively settled. Considerable doubts have been felt especially about the authorship of ch. vi and vii, chiefly because of their different moral background, the corruption of the whole city instead of the oppression by the ruling classes, as in the early chapters. For a very lucid and essentially fair discussion of this and other critical points, the reader is referred to Dr. Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, ch. vi.

² See Amos, *Introd.* p. 2.

MICAH

The Superscription^a. i. 1.

- 1 THE word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morashtite^b in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

Part I.

PROPHECIES DIRECTED CHIEFLY AGAINST SOCIAL INJUSTICE OF THE TIME OF AHAZ AND EARLY DAYS OF HEZEKIAH. i. 2—ii. 11, and iii. 1—12.

I. THE JUDGEMENT THAT IS TO COME ON BOTH KINGDOMS. i. 2—16.

THE PRELUDE. i. 2—5.

Jehovah descends in storm to punish Israel and Judah.

- 2 Hear, ye peoples, all of you ;
Hearken, O earth, and ¹all that therein is : ¹ Heb. *the fulness thereof.*
And let the Lord GOD be witness ²against you,
The Lord from his holy temple^c. ² Or, *among*
- 3 For, behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place,
And will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth.
- 4 And the mountains shall be molten^d under him,
And the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire,
As waters that are poured down a steep place.
- 5 For the transgression of Jacob^e is all this,
And for the sins of the house of Israel.
What is the transgression of Jacob ?

^a This is an editorial note added at a later time, but its general correctness is borne out by the contents. We know from Jer. xxvi. 18 that iii. 12 was uttered in the days of Hezekiah, as we should naturally have expected, and the reign of Ahaz is the most probable time for the prophecy of the downfall of Samaria. But if Micah was the writer of vi and vii (see note on vi. 1), it seems probable that he survived into the reign of Manasseh.

^b Probably an inhabitant of Moresheth-gath. See ver. 14.

^c i.e. the heaven, as is clear from the next verse.

^d The waters running down the mountain sides suggest that they are melting.

^e Though Jacob and Israel each include both Northern and Southern Kingdoms, Micah seems to have the latter principally in his mind. Samaria was the great cause of offence, and would deservedly be punished. That the same was also true of Jerusalem is added here parenthetically, but becomes the main theme in ver. 9 ff.

Is it not Samaria?
 And what are the high places ^a of Judah?
 Are they not Jerusalem?

Samaria's punishment for idolatry. i. 6, 7.

Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, 6

And as the plantings of a vineyard ^b:

And I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley,

And I will discover ^c the foundations thereof.

And all her graven images shall be beaten to pieces, 7

And all her hires ^d shall be burned with fire,

And all her idols will I lay desolate:

For of the hire of an harlot hath she gathered them,

And unto the hire of an harlot shall they return ^e.

The prophet laments for Israel's fate, which also threatens Judah. i. 8, 9.

For this will I wail and howl, 8

I will go stripped and naked:

I will make a wailing like the jackals,

And a mourning like the ostriches.

For her wounds are incurable: 9

For it is come even unto Judah;

It reacheth unto the gate of my people,

Even to Jerusalem.

The misery of the townships of Judah as the waves of calamity roll along the lowlands round Micah's native town ^f. i. 10-16.

Tell it not in Gath ^g, weep not at all: 10

At ¹ Beth-le-Aphrah ² have I rolled myself in the dust ^h.

¹ That is,
A house of dust.

² Another reading is,
roll thyself.

^a i. e. idolatry. Samaria was a great centre of idolatrous and half-idolatrous worship, and Jerusalem had become so under Ahaz.

^b The ruin becomes a suitable place for a vineyard, just as in Isa. v. 17 for pasturage.

^c Lay bare. Cf. Ps. xxix. 9 (A.V.).

^d The offerings with which they have hired the favours of their gods. Here called the hire of a harlot, because idolatry meant faithlessness to Jehovah. See Hos. ii. 12, &c. There may possibly be a further reference to licentious forms of worship.

^e They would be used for similar purposes by a heathen enemy.

^f The leading thought in this passage is that these different places round about the prophet's home would suffer from the enemy in various ways. But this is expressed by a series of plays upon the words, in some cases very forced and hardly intelligible even in the original Hebrew. See Introd. p. 165.

^g A quotation from 2 Sam. i. 20, 'Do not give the enemy an opportunity of crowing over the coming disaster'; introduced for the sake of assonance.

^h A sign of degradation and mourning.

- 11 Pass ye away, O ¹inhabitant of Shaphir, in naked-¹ Heb. *inhabitrass.*
ness and shame ^a;
The ¹inhabitant of Zaanān is not come forth ^b;
The wailing of Beth-ezel ^c shall take from you the
² stay thereof. ² Or, *stand-
ing place*
- 12 For the ¹inhabitant of Maroth ³waiteth anxiously for
good ^d: ³ Or, *is in
travail* †
Because evil is come down from the LORD
Unto the gate of Jerusalem.
- 13 Bind the chariot to the swift steed, O ¹inhabitant
of Lachish ^e:
She was the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion ^f;
For the transgressions of Israel were found in thee.
- 14 Therefore shalt thou give a parting gift to Moresheth-
gath ^g:
The houses of Achzib ^h shall be ⁴a deceitful thing ⁴ Heb. *achzab.* †
unto the kings of Israel.
- 15 I will yet bring unto thee, O ¹inhabitant of Mare-
shah ⁱ, him that shall possess thee:
The glory of Israel shall come even unto Adullam ^k.
- 16 Make thee bald ^l,
And poll thee for the children of thy delight:
Enlarge thy baldness as the ⁵eagle ^m; ⁵ Or, *vulture* †
For they are gone into captivity from thee.

II. JUDAH'S WEALTHY SPOILERS SHALL BE THEMSELVES SPOILED. ii. 1-5.

- 2 Woe to them that devise iniquity
And work evil upon their beds!
When the morning is light, they practise it,
Because it is in the power of their hand.

N.B. An obelus (†) attached to a marginal note shews that the alternative rendering or reading is preferred, or calls attention to some other important point.

- ^a In contrast to Shaphir, 'beautiful'.
^b 'Were unable to escape'—the name Zaanān looks like 'going forth'.
^c Perhaps 'strong town', and yet it would lose its stay.
^d But experienced bitterness, as the name implied. Cf. Ruth i. 20.
^e i. e. make haste to flee.
^f She was the first from whom the infection of idolatry spread to Judah.
^g The pun here is obvious, but the application is to us quite unintelligible.
^h They would trust in them for defence or help in vain.
ⁱ The same play as in ver. 14. Here it is the enemy that would possess the city and dispossess the inhabitants.
^k No satisfactory explanation has been given of this line.
^l Cutting the hair was a common sign of mourning (cf. Amos viii. 10), afterwards forbidden probably as a heathen superstition. Deut. xiv. 1; Lev. xxi. 5, &c. Judah is here compared to a mother grieving over her children carried into exile.
^m i. e. the griffon or bald-headed vulture. *Gyps fulvus*, Sav.

And they covet fields, and seize them ;
 And houses, and take them away :
 And they oppress a man and his house,
 Even a man and his heritage.

Therefore thus saith the LORD :

Behold, against this family do I devise an evil,
 From which ye shall not remove your necks ^a,
 Neither shall ye walk haughtily ;
 For it is an evil time ^b.

In that day shall they take up a parable against you, ⁴
 And lament ¹ with a doleful lamentation, *and* say,

We be utterly spoiled :

He changeth the portion of my people :

How doth he ² remove *it* from me !

To the rebellious he divideth our fields ^c.

Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast the ⁵
 line by lot

In the congregation of the LORD ^d.

¹ Or, *with the lamentation, It is done ; and say &c.*

² Or, *depart from*

³ Or, *Prophesy ye not, they are ever prophesying, say they.*
 Heb. *Drop &c.*
 See

Amos vii. 16.

⁴ Or, *of these things :*

their reproaches never cease

⁵ Or, *O thou*

that art named the house of Jacob

⁶ Or, *impatient*
 Heb.

shortened.

⁷ Heb.

yesterday.

III. IT IS VAIN TO ATTEMPT TO SUPPRESS
 THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY, WHICH
 HURTS ONLY THOSE WHO DESERVE
 IT. ii. 6-11.

³ Prophesy ye not, *thus* they prophesy.

They shall not prophesy ⁴ to these :

Reproaches shall not depart ^e.

⁵ Shall it be said, O house of Jacob,

Is the spirit of the LORD ⁶ straitened ^f ?

Are these his doings ?

Do not my words do good to him that walketh
 uprightly ?

But ^g ⁷ of late my people is risen up as an enemy : ⁸

Ye strip the robe from off the garment ^h

^a The yoke of punishment would check their haughty spirit.

^b A time of trouble. Cf. Amos v. 13.

^c Jehovah divides Israel's possessions among her enemy.

^d Probably a reference to the division of the land by lot, of which the earliest tradition survives in Joshua xvi. 1 ; Judges i. 3.

^e The text is hardly intelligible as it stands, and is probably corrupt, but appears to be a request to Micah to stop his gloomy prophecies.

^f It is not God's spirit speaking through His prophets which is at fault ('straitened' = powerless to do good, like the arm too short to do its work), but the hearers. To the upright it proclaims a reward, to the wicked a well-merited punishment.

^g Ver. 8, 9 express in a forcible way the accusation of dispossessing the poor by unjust suits or heartlessly claiming a mortgage.

^h i.e. probably the cloak from the tight-fitting tunic. They act as enemies to, and violently rob, peaceable men.

From them that pass by securely *as men* averse from war.

- 9 The women of my people ye cast out from their pleasant houses^a;
From their young children ye take away my glory^b for ever.

- 10 Arise ye, and depart^c;
For this is not your rest:
Because of uncleanness¹ that destroyeth,
Even with a grievous destruction.

¹ The Sept. has, *ye shall be destroyed with &c.* +
² Or, *in a spirit of falsehood*

- 11 If a man walking² in wind and falsehood do lie, *saying*, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people^d.

* * * *

ISRAEL'S GLORIOUS FUTURE, WHEN 'THE BREAKER' WILL LEAD THE REMNANT BACK TO THEIR LAND^e. ii. 12, 13.

- 12 I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee;
I will surely gather the remnant of Israel;
I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah:
As a flock in the midst of their pasture,
They shall make great noise by reason of *the multitude of men*.

- 13 The breaker^f is gone up before them:
They have broken forth
And passed on to the gate,
And are gone out thereat:
And their king is passed on before them,
And the LORD^g at the head of them.

* * * *

IV. THE SAVAGE RAPACITY OF THE RULERS WILL BRING A MERCILESS RETRIBUTION. iii. 1-4.

B And I said,
Hear, I pray you, ye heads of Jacob,

^a The poor women are turned out of their homes, of which their creditors (?) take possession.

^b This probably refers to clothes as a mark of modesty and God's honour. Some explain it as the privileges of God's people.

^c Move off into exile.
^d See ver. 6. They had no objection to a prophet who encouraged them in drunkenness.

^e This beautiful fragment is clearly out of place here. It assumes the judgement to have already taken place.

^f The metaphor of the shepherd gathering his flock at night is exchanged for that of a great crowd of prisoners. Their leader first makes a breach in their prison walls, and then leads them out through the gates of the city. Cf. Isa. xlii. 7.

^g Their leader or king proves to be no other than Jehovah Himself.

And rulers of the house of Israel :
 Is it not for you to know judgement ?
 Who hate the good, and love the evil ; 2
 Who pluck off their skin from off them,
 And their flesh from off their bones ;
 Who also eat the flesh of my people ; 3
 And they flay their skin from off them,
 And break their bones :
 Yea, they chop them in pieces, as for the pot,
 And as flesh within the caldron ^a.
 Then shall they cry unto the LORD, 4
 But he will not answer them :
 Yea, he will hide his face from them at that time,
 According as they have wrought evil in their doings ^b.

V. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE FALSE PROPHETS AND THE TRUE. iii. 5-8.

Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that 5
 make my people to err ; that bite with their teeth and
 cry, Peace ; and whoso putteth not into their mouths,
 they even ¹ prepare war against him ^c :

¹ Heb.
sanctify.

' Therefore it shall be night unto you, 6
 That ye shall have no vision ;
 And it shall be dark unto you,
 That ye shall not divine ' ;

And the sun shall go down upon the prophets,
 And the day shall be black over them.
 And the seers shall be ashamed, 7
 And the diviners confounded ;
 Yea, they shall all cover their lips ^d :

² Or, *even*
the spirit

For there is no answer of God.
 But I truly am full of power ² by the spirit of the 8
 LORD,
 And of judgement, and of might,
 To declare unto Jacob his transgression,
 And to Israel his sin.

^a The treatment of the poor by the rulers is very forcibly compared to a man, with bestial greed, chopping and crushing the bones of a sheep as he prepares it for his own meal. Cf. Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3.

^b Prayer is worthless if combined with injustice. Cf. Isa. i. 15.

^c These prophets said smooth things to those who fed them, and those who did not they abused.

^d For shame at the lies they had told and as a sign of mourning. Cf. Ezek. xxiv. 17.

VI. PALACES REARED BY THE ILL-GOTTEN GAINS OF RULERS, PRIESTS AND PROPHETS WOULD BECOME A RUIN FROM WHICH NO MERE PIETY COULD SAVE THEM. iii. 9-12.

- 9 Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob,
 And rulers of the house of Israel,
 That abhor judgement,
 And pervert all equity.
- 10 They build up Zion with blood,
 And Jerusalem with iniquity.
- 11 The heads thereof judge for reward,
 And the priests thereof teach for hire,
 And the prophets thereof divine for money :
 Yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say,
 Is not the LORD in the midst of us ?
 No evil shall come upon us ^a.
- 12 Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as
 a field,
 And Jerusalem shall become heaps,
 And the mountain of the house ^b as the high
 places of a forest.

Part III.

PROPHECIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ASCENDANCY OF ASSYRIA DURING THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH.
 iv, v.

I. THE GLORIOUS DAYS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. iv. 1-8.

Zion the spiritual centre of the world. iv. 1-5.

- 4 ¹ But ^c in the latter days it shall come to pass,
 That the mountain of the LORD's house
 Shall be established ² in the top of the ² Or, at the
 mountains, ^{head}
 And it shall be exalted above the hills ;

^a Cf. Jer. vii. 4. The absurdity of supposing that the mere presence of Jehovah was of any use !

^b The temple on Mount Moriah. This prediction a hundred years later saved the life of Jeremiah (see Jer. xxvi. 18)—a proof of the deep impression which Micah's prophecies had made.

^c ver. 1-3. Probably a quotation. See note on Isa. ii. 1-4. It seems likely, however, that ver. 4 of Micah should also be included. Though the first verse forms a striking and beautiful contrast to iii. 12, and that not improbably designed by Micah or the compiler, it really belongs to a different prophecy or group of prophecies, with quite a different historical background. See Introd. p. 166.

And peoples shall flow unto it. 2

And many nations shall go and say,
Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of
the LORD,

And to the house of the God of Jacob ;
And he will teach us of his ways,
And we will walk in his paths :

† ¹ Or,
instruction

For out of Zion shall go forth ¹ the law,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

² Or, among

³ Or, great

† ⁴ Or,
decide
concerning

And he shall judge ² between ³ many peoples, 3
And shall ⁴ reprove strong nations afar off ;
And they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruninghooks :
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more.

But they shall sit every man under his vine and 4
under his fig tree ^a ;

And none shall make them afraid :

For the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.

⁵ Or, walk

For all the peoples ⁵ will walk every one in the name 5
of his god,
And we will walk in the name of the LORD our God
for ever and ever ^b.

*The oppressed captives would be gathered and become
once more a mighty nation under Jehovah their
King. iv. 6-8.*

In that day, saith the LORD, 6
Will I assemble her that halteth,
And I will gather her that is driven away,
And her that I have afflicted ;
And I will make her that halted a remnant, 7
And her that was cast far off a strong nation :
And the LORD shall reign over them in mount
Zion

⁶ Or, Eder
See Gen.
xxxv. 21.

From henceforth even for ever.
And thou, O tower of ⁶ the flock ^c, 8

^a A proverbial expression for peace and security. Cf. 1 Kings iv. 25, &c.

^b The heathen may worship their own gods, but we will be faithful to ours. The first step to realising the ideal of the one religion for all is for Israel to be faithful to her own God.

^c Towers were used for the protection of flocks (see 2 Chron. xxvi. 10), and hence came sometimes to be the name of a place, as in Gen. xxxv. 21. Here it and 'the hill of the daughter of Zion' are poetical expressions for Jerusalem and her forts. Jerusalem, under her King Jehovah, would be powerful as in the days of old. There may possibly be a latent reference to the shepherd king, David.

¹ The hill of the daughter of Zion,
 Unto thee shall it come ;
 Yea, the former dominion shall come,
 The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.

¹ Heb.
Ophel.

II. FUTURE DELIVERANCE MUST BE PRECEDED BY ANGUISH AND EXILE IN BABYLON. iv. 9, 10.

9 Now why dost thou cry out aloud ?
 Is there no king in thee,
 Is thy counsellor perished,
 That pangs have taken hold of thee as of a woman
 in travail ?

10 Be in pain ^a,
 And labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion,
 Like a woman in travail :
 For now shalt thou go forth out of the city,
 And shalt dwell in the field,
 And shalt come even unto Babylon ^b ;
 There shalt thou be rescued ;
 There shall the LORD redeem thee
 From the hand of thine enemies.

III. THE VICTORY OF ISRAEL OVER HER BESIEGING FOE. iv. 11—v. 6.

The nations which assembled against Jerusalem would be threshed by her like sheaves of corn. iv. 11-13.

11 And now many nations are assembled against thee,
 That say, Let her be defiled,
 And let our eye ^c ² see *its desire* upon Zion.
 12 But they know not the thoughts of the LORD,
 Neither understand they his counsel :
 For he hath gathered them as the sheaves to the
 threshing-floor.
 13 Arise and thresh ^d, O daughter of Zion :
 For I will make thine horn ^e iron,

² Or, gaze
 upon

^a Her pangs of painful expectation are fully justified.

^b The mention of Babylon has induced some critics to believe that these verses are by a later prophet, writing when the Babylonian power was predominant. Ver. 9 also agrees better with the days of the last impotent kings of Judah than with those of Hezekiah. This accounts also for the different conception of ver. 11 ff.

^c 'To look upon' is a common phrase for gloating over the disaster of an enemy. Cf. Obad. 12, &c.

^d Cf. Isa. xxi. 10 ; xli. 15.

^e The symbol of power.

And I will make thy hoofs brass :
 And thou shalt beat in pieces many peoples :
 And ¹ thou shalt devote their gain ^a unto the
 LORD,
 And their substance unto the Lord of the whole
 earth.

¹ So the
 ancient ver-
 sions. The
 Hebrew text
 as pointed
 reads, *I will
 devote.*

The siege and insult to her present king. v. 1.

[Ch. iv. 14
 in Heb.]

Now shalt thou gather thyself in troops,
 O daughter of troops ^b :
 He hath laid siege against us :
 They shall smite the judge of Israel
 With a rod upon the cheek.

5

*The King, in spite of His mean birthplace, would unite
 Israel in a world-wide rule. v. 2-4.*

[Ch. v. 1 in
 Heb.]
[†] ² Or,
families
 See Judg. vi.
 15.

But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, ²
 Which art little to be among the ² thousands of
 Judah,
 Out of thee shall one come forth unto me
 That is to be ruler in Israel ^c ;
 Whose goings forth are from of old,
³ From everlasting.

³ Or, *from
 ancient days*

Therefore will he give them up, ³
 Until the time that she which travaileth hath
 brought forth ^d :
 Then the residue of his brethren shall return
⁴ unto the children of Israel ^e.

⁴ Or, *with*

And he shall stand, and shall feed *his flock* ^f ⁴
 In the strength of the LORD,
 In the majesty of the name of the LORD his
 God :
 And they shall abide ;
 For now shall he be great unto the ends of the
 earth.

^a i. e. spoil.

^b Marauding bands. Jerusalem had become a robber city, but the robber-bands could not save her. 'He' and 'they' both refer to the enemy.

^c Probably there is an allusion here and in the last clauses to David, who is frequently in prophecy identified with the Messiah. For the quotation in Matt. ii. 6, see p. 166 and General Introduction, pp. xviii and xxvi.

^d This can hardly refer to the birth of the Ruler, because the return immediately follows. It seems merely used as a mark of time.

^e The captives return to the rest of their people.

^f The Ruler, as frequently in prophetic literature, is compared to a shepherd, probably in this case with special reference to David, the type of the Messiah.

The King with his many 'princes' would not only defend them from the Assyrian, but wage a wasting war in the enemy's territory. v. 5, 6.

- 5 And this *man* shall be *our* peace^a :
 When the Assyrian shall come into our land,
 And when he shall tread in our palaces,
 Then shall we raise against him seven^b shepherds,
 And eight¹ principal men.
- 6 And they shall² waste the land of Assyria with the sword,
 And the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof :
 And he shall deliver us from the Assyrian,
 When he cometh into our land,
 And when he treadeth within our border.
- ¹ Or,
prince among men †
² Or, *eat up*
 Or, *be shepherds over*

IV. THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF THE NATION AGAINST ALL THE ENEMIES OF GOD.

v. 7-15.

The remnant, mightily increased by Divine power, would, by the same power, tear in pieces the nations. v. 7-9.

- 7 And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples
 As dew from the LORD^c,
 As showers upon the grass ;
 That tarrieth not for man,
 Nor waiteth for the sons of men.
- 8 And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples,
 As a lion among the beasts of the forest,
 As a young lion among the flocks of sheep :
 Who, if he go through, treadeth down
 And teareth in pieces,
 And there is none to deliver.
- 9 Let thine hand be lifted up above thine adversaries,
 And let all thine enemies be cut off.

^a Cf. Isa. ix. 5. The Ruler would secure peace in spite of an Assyrian invasion. Micah had the immediate prospect, not a distant future, in his mind.

^b 'Seven,' 'eight.' Cf. the similar use of 'three' and 'four' in Amos i. 3, 6, &c. See note on Amos i. 3.

^c While the general thought is the same, the prophetic scene entirely changes. The chief point of the metaphor seems to lie in the immense number of the drops of dew or fine rain and the sudden and miraculous way in which it springs up. Cf. Ps. cx. 3 (R.V. marg.). To explain these words, as many commentators do, directly of the beneficial influence of Israel on the nations, as in Deutero-Isaiah, seems alien to the whole tenor of the passage.

*With the help of Jehovah once known and recognised,
the Jewish people will need neither fortifications nor
the help of idols and other religious symbols, either for
defence or vengeance on the foe. v. 10-15.*

And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, 10
That I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of
thee,

And will destroy thy chariots :

And I will cut off the cities of thy land, 11

And will throw down all thy strong holds :

And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand ; 12

And thou shalt have no *more* soothsayers :

And I will cut off thy graven images 13

† ¹ Or,
obelisks

And thy ¹ pillars ^a out of the midst of thee ;

And thou shalt no more worship the work of
thine hands.

² See Ex.
xxxiv. 13.

And I will pluck up thine ² Asherim ^b out of the 14
midst of thee :

³ Or,
enemies

And I will destroy thy ³ cities.

And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury 15

⁴ Or, *such
as they have
not heard*

Upon the nations ⁴ which hearkened not.

Part III.

A COLLECTION OF PROPHECIES BELONGING PRO-
BABLY IN THE MAIN TO MANASSEH'S REIGN.
vi, vii.

I. A DIALOGUE DESIGNED TO SHEW THAT GOD REQUIRES GOODNESS RATHER THAN SACRIFICE. vi. 1-8.

*Prelude. The mountains and hills summoned to
witness the pleading. vi. 1, 2.*

Hear ye now what the LORD saith :

6

Arise, contend thou before the mountains,

And let the hills hear thy voice.

Hear, O ye mountains, the LORD's controversy, 2

And ye enduring foundations of the earth :

For the LORD hath a controversy with his people,

And he will plead with Israel.

*Jehovah pleads, appealing to His goodness to Israel in
the past. vi. 3-5.*

O my people, what have I done unto thee ? 3

And wherein have I wearied thee ?

^a See note on Hos. iii. 4.

^b See note on Isa. xvii. 8.

■ What harm have I ever done thee that thou shouldst turn away from ME ?

Testify against me.

- 4 For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt,
And redeemed thee out of the house of bondage;
And I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and
Miriam.

- 5 O my people, remember now what Balak king of
Moab consulted,
And what Balaam the son of Beor answered
him^a;

Remember from Shittim unto Gilgal^b,
That ye may know the righteous acts of the
LORD.

Israel asks whether it is sacrifice that God requires?
vi. 6, 7.

- 6 Wherewith shall I come before the LORD,
And bow myself before the high God?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings^c,
With calves of a year old?
7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
Or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul^d?

*God's reply through the prophet. What He asks for is
justice, mercy, and humility.* vi. 8.

- 8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good;
And what doth the LORD require of thee,
But to do justly,
And to love mercy,
And to walk humbly with thy God?

II. A PROPHECY AGAINST SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CRIMES. vi. 9-16.

*The people are advised to listen to the terrible warning
of Jehovah.* vi. 9.

- 9 The voice of the LORD crieth unto the city,

^a The curse being turned into a blessing was a further proof of God's goodness. See Num. xxiii. 20; xxiv. 10.

^b 'Shittim unto Gilgal'—from the incident of Balaam to the entrance to the Holy Land, with special reference to the crossing of the Jordan. See Num. xxv. 1; Joshua iii. 1; iv. 19.

^c There is a climax throughout and a subtle dramatic irony. As the passage proceeds, it becomes increasingly clear to the reader that nothing whatever of this kind can possibly please God, be it one, or thousands, or tens of thousands, be it dumb beast or man.

^d The horrible practice of child-sacrifice prevailed in Manasseh's reign. Cf. 2 Kings xxi. 6.

† ¹ Some
ancient ver-
sions read,
fear.

And *the man of wisdom* will ¹ see thy name ^a :
Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

*The heaping up of riches by commercial fraud and the
violence which it led to. vi. 10-12.*

Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the ¹⁰
house of the wicked,

² Heb.
ephah

And the scant ² measure that is abominable?

Shall I be pure ^b with wicked balances, 11

And with a bag of deceitful weights?

For the rich men thereof are full of violence, 12

And the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies,

And their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

Jehovah would punish them by deprivation. vi. 13-15.

Therefore I also have ^c smitten thee with a grievous ¹³
wound ;

I have made thee desolate because of thy sins.

Thou shalt eat, 14

But not be satisfied ;

³ Or,
emptiness

And thy ³ humiliation shall be in the midst of thee :

And thou shalt remove,

But shalt not carry away safe ;

And that which thou carriest away will I give up to
the sword.

Thou shalt sow, 15

But shalt not reap :

Thou shalt tread the olives,

But shalt not anoint thee with oil ;

And the vintage,

But shalt not drink the wine.

*A further reason for Jehovah's punishment: Phœnician
Baal-worship. vi. 16.*

For the statutes of Omri are kept, 16

And all the works of the house of Ahab ^d,

And ye walk in their counsels :

^a The wise man recognises God's approaching power ; if they were wise they would do the same.

^b Probably we should translate, after all, taking different vowel points as in A.V., 'Shall I count them pure', the speaker being Jehovah.

^c Prophetic past. The prophet here contrasts this hoarded ill-gotten wealth with the deprivation of the ordinary means of life by an enemy.

^d If this is literally correct it would seem to place this prophecy in the reign of Jehosaphat or Ahaziah of Judah ; but it may be a way of describing heathen idolatry in general, and refer to the cults introduced by Manasseh.

That I should make thee ¹ a desolation ^a,
And the inhabitants thereof an hissing ;
And ye shall bear the reproach of my people ^b.

¹ Or, *an astonishment*

III. A BITTER LAMENTATION OVER THE CORRUPTION OF A HOPELESS AGE. vii. 1-6.

God's disappointment at the want of uprightness.

vii. 1, 2 a.

7 Woe is me !

For I ^c am as when they have gathered the summer
fruits,

As the grape gleanings of the vintage :

There is no cluster to eat ;

² My soul desireth the firstripe fig.

2 The godly man is perished out of the earth,
And there is none upright among men :

² Or, *Nor firstripe fig which my soul desired†*

*Violence and corruption bring about the long-foretold
punishment.* vii. 2 b-4.

They all lie in wait for blood ;

They hunt every man his brother with a net.

3 ³ Their hands are upon that which is evil to do it ³ Or, *Both hands are put forth for evil to do it &c.*
diligently ;
The prince asketh, and the judge *is ready* for
a reward ;

And the great man, he uttereth the mischief of
his soul :

Thus they weave it together.

4 The best of them is as a brier :

⁴ The most upright is *worse* than a thorn hedge ^d : ⁴ Or, *The straightest is as it were taken from &c.*
The day of thy watchmen, even thy visitation, is
come ^e ;

Now shall be their perplexity.

Civil discord and the rupture of family ties. vii. 5, 6.

5 Trust ye not in a friend ^f,
Put ye not confidence in a ⁵ guide :

⁵ Or, *familiar friend†*

^a This is the natural result of such conduct.

^b Suffer all the more because you are my people (cf. Amos iii. 2) ; but the LXX, 'Suffer the reproach of the Gentiles', is much more intelligible, and involves only an insignificant alteration of the text.

^c The speaker may be the prophet, but more probably it is Jehovah. He looks for the best fruit, and finds none, or only what is worthless. Cf. Isa. v. 2.

^d The very best wound and tear.

^e The day foretold by the prophets (see note on Isa. xxi. 6), God's visitation in anger.

^f The punishment comes not from without, but from within. It is a condition of anarchy which breaks all the bonds of friendship and family relation-

Keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth
in thy bosom.

For the son dishonoureth the father, 6
The daughter riseth up against her mother,
The daughter in law against her mother in law ;
A man's enemies are the men of his own house.

IV. A SOLILOQUY: THE PATIENCE OF
PENITENT ISRAEL UNDER GOD'S DIS-
CIPLINE AND HER ENEMY'S DERI-
SION WILL BRING ITS OWN REWARD.
vii. 7-10.

¹ Or, *in the
Lord will I
keep watch*

But as for me, ¹ I will look unto the LORD ; 7
I will wait for the God of my salvation :
My God will hear me.

² See ver. 10.

Rejoice not against me, O ² mine enemy ^a : 8
When I fall, I shall arise ;
When I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light
unto me.

I will bear the indignation of the LORD, 9
Because I have sinned against him ;
Until he plead my cause,
And execute judgement for me :
He will bring me forth to the light,
And I shall behold his righteousness.

Then mine enemy shall see it, 10
And shame shall cover her ;
Which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy God ?
Mine eyes shall behold her ^b ;
Now shall she be trodden down as the mire of
the streets.

V. THE RESTORED NATION WILL DWELL
IN PEACE AND SECURITY. vii. 11-17.

*The inevitable punishment to be followed by a general
restoration of the exiles and rebuilding of the city.*
vii. 11-13.

³ Or, *In the
day that thy
walls are to
be built*

⁴ See
Zeph. ii. 2.

⁵ Or,
boundary

³ A day for building thy walls ! 11
In that day shall ⁴ the ⁵ decree ^c be far removed.
In that day shall they come unto thee, 12

^a Probably Assyria.

^b i.e. look with joy upon her punishment (see note on iv. 11). Such a thought, though far below the Christian standard, finds a parallel in Ps. cxxxvii. 7-9.

^c God's decree of banishment, or, according to the margin, the boundary of the country, will be extended. Cf. Isa. xxxiii. 17.

- From Assyria and the cities of ¹ Egypt ^a,
 And from ¹ Egypt even to the River,
 And from sea to sea,
 And *from* mountain to mountain ^b.
 13 Yet shall the land be desolate ^c
 Because of them that dwell therein,
 For the fruit of their doings.

¹ Heb.
Mazor.

*God grants the prophet's prayer for the guidance and
 protection of His people. vii. 14, 15.*

- 14 ² Feed thy people with thy rod ^d,
 The flock of thine heritage,
 Which dwell solitarily, in the forest in the midst
 of Carmel :
 Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead,
 As in the days of old.
 15 As in the days of thy coming forth out of
 the land of Egypt
 Will I shew unto him marvellous things.

² Or, *Rule*

*The nations in their terror submit themselves to Israel's
 God. vii. 16, 17.*

- 16 The nations shall see
 And be ashamed of all their might :
 They shall lay their hand upon their mouth,
 Their ears shall be deaf ^e.
 17 They shall lick the dust like a serpent ;
 Like crawling things of the earth they shall come
 trembling out of their close places ^f :
 They shall come with fear unto the LORD our
 God,
 And shall be afraid because of thee.

^a Assyria and Egypt were the two great world-powers of Micah's day.

^b From all parts of the world, wherever they might be.

^c The punishment must first come, because God could not overlook Israel's sin.

^d 'Shepherd Thy people with the staff.' It conveys the double thought of food and protection. The leading idea is the petition that the sheep may feed once more in their pastures. Bashan and Gilead were celebrated for their rich pasture land (Num. xxxii. 1). Carmel, 'the fruitful garden', was famed for its beauty. Pusey explains, 'Feed Thy people in Babylon, which is to them a wild, homeless tract, that it may be to them as their own peaceful garden', and compares Isa. xxix. 17. But the meaning of this line is very uncertain. See note on Amos iv. 1.

^e They shut their mouths as a proof of submission (Isa. lii. 15), and are deaf because astounded.

^f In abject fear, only just venturing to crawl out of their holes.

VI. A CONCLUDING SONG OF THANKS-
GIVING TO GOD FOR HIS MERCY AND
FAITHFULNESS. vii. 18-20.

Who is a God like unto thee ^a, 18
That pardoneth iniquity,
And passeth by the transgression of the remnant
of his heritage?
He retaineth not his anger for ever,
Because he delighteth in mercy.

¹ Or,
*subdue our
iniquities*

He will turn again and have compassion upon us; 19
He will ¹ tread our iniquities under foot :
And thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths
of the sea.

² Or, *Thou
wilt shew
thy faith-
fulness &c.*

² Thou wilt ³ perform the truth to Jacob, 20
And the mercy ^b to Abraham,
Which thou hast sworn unto our fathers
From the days of old.

³ Heb. *give*.

^a Possibly in allusion to Micah's name ('Who is like unto Jah?').

^b i.e. perform the covenant of mercy. Cf. Isa. lv. 3.

LECTIONARY TABLE

Shewing the days on which the several chapters or sections of the books
of the Prophets in this volume are appointed to be read in the
services of the Church of England.

SUNDAY OR HOLY DAY	MORNING	EVENING	EVENING
First Sunday in Advent	Isaiah i	Isaiah ii	Isa. iv. 2-6
Second Sunday in Advent	v	xi. 1-10	xxiv
Third Sunday in Advent	xxv	xxvi	xxviii. 5-18
Fourth Sunday in Advent	xxx. 1-26	xxxii	xxxiii. 2-22
St. Thomas's Day (Dec. 21)		xxxv	
Christmas Day (Dec. 25)	ix. 1-7	vii. 10-16	
St. John the Evangelist's Day (Dec. 27)		vi	
First Sunday after Christmas	xxxv	xxxviii	xl
St. Matthias's Day (Feb. 24)		xxii. 15-25	
Feast of the Annunciation (Mar. 25) (Epistle)	vii. 10-15		
Thursday before Easter	Hos. xiii. 1-14	Hos. xiv	
Easter Even		v. 8-vi. 3	
Whitsun Day		Isaiah xi	
Whitsun Tuesday		Mic. iv. 1-7	
Trinity Sunday	Isaiah vi. 1-10		
Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity .	Hos. xiv.		
Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity	Amos iii	Amos v	Amos ix
Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity .	Mic. iv-v. 7	Mic. vi	Micah vii
St. Simon and St. Jude's Day (Oct. 28)	Is. xxviii. 9-16		

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23	v. 8-vi. 6	vii. 8-16	22	vi	vii. 1-16
24	viii	ix	23	viii. 5-17	viii. 18-ix. 7
25	x	xi-xii. 6	24	ix. 8-x. 4	x. 5-19
26	xiii. 1-14	xiv	25	x. 20-34	xi. 1-9
30		Amos i-ii. 3	26	xi. 10-16	xii
Oct.			27	xiii	xiv. 1-23
1	Amos ii. 4- iii. 8	iv. 4-13	28	xvii	xviii
2	v. 1-17	v. 18-vi. 8	29	xix. 1-15	xix. 16-25
3	vii	viii	Dec.		
4	ix		1	xxi. 1-12	xxii. 1-14
7	Mic. i. 1-9	Micah ii	2	xxii. 15-25	xxiii
8	iii	iv	3	xxiv	xxv
9	v	vi	4	xxvi. 1-19	xxvi. 20-
10	vii				xxvii
Nov.			5	xxviii. 1-13	xxviii. 14-29
18		Isa. i. 1-20	6	xxix. 1-8	xxix. 9-24
19	Isa. i. 21-31	ii	7	xxx. 1-17	xxx. 18-33
20	iii. 1-15	iv. 2-6	8	xxxi	xxxii
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